

madhvanama

jyEshTa shudhdha caturdashi is the puNya-dina of shrIpAdarAjaru, the great mAdhva saint. His contributions to haridAsa literature, the growth and propagation of dvaita, and other fields are immense and well documented.

One of the most popular works of shrIpAdarAja is madhvanAma. This is a kannada poem extolling vAyu dEvaru and his three incarnations. It follows the structure of shri hari-vAyu stuti and was composed by shrIpAdarAjaru for the benefit of those who dont know sanskrit and / or are not allowed to recite the vAyu-stuti.

In this short but potent work shrIpAdarAjaru has not only captured the essence of the shri hari-vAyu stuti but also embedded several key, and not so well known concepts, as well as incidents from Ramayana and Mahabharata. One has to remember that shrIpAdarAjaru was an amsha of dhruva, an aparOksha gyani, a very great scholar and the vidya-guru of shrI vyAsarAja. So, his description of vAyudevaru and his three incarnations, is bound to be complete and flawless. The fact that another great aparOksha gyani - shrI jagannAtha dasaru - has written the phala-stuti of this work is a testimony to its potency and greatness.

Each verse is covered as follows - an ITRANS rendition is provided, followed by a word-by-word meaning, a quick translation, followed by a discussion of the concept / incident highlighted in the verse, along with appropriate references. The word-by-word meaning is for the benefit of those who dont know Kannada (and those who have just a passing acquaintance with the language).

Before starting on a detailed explanation of the stotra, a brief, thumbnail sketch of the author is in order.

Guru ShrIpAdarAjaru - an outline

ShrIpAdarAjaru is revered by all mAdhvAs. It is believed that he was an amsha of dhruva. His contributions to dvaita, haridAsa sAhitya, and the then existing social and political circumstances were considerable.

His pUrvAshrama nAma was LakshmiInArAyana. His predecessor was svarNavarNa theertharu. There is an interesting story about their first meeting. The swamiji was travelling towards abbUru when he came across LakshmiInArAyana playing with this friends. When asked how far abbUru was, the little boy gave a very clever reply. He said, "Look at the setting sun, and look at us playing here. Now you guess how far abbUru is! " (the intended meaning was "we are playing here even though the sun is setting because we are confident of reaching home before it gets really dark; in other words, abbUru is very near ! "). The swamiji was taken back by the boy's keen intellect and decided to make him sisHyA. Later, after obtaining his parent's consent, the boy was granted sanyAshrama and named LakshmiInArAyana yOgi.

The name ShrIpAdarAja was given to him by Sri RaghunAtha tIrrTharu of uttarAdi muTa. There are 2 versions about why he did so; one version goes that he was impressed by young LakshmiInArAyana yOgi's vidvat, whereas another goes that he personally witnessed the revival of a dead boy by LakshmiInArAyana yOgi. In any case, from then on LakshmiInArAyana yOgi became ShrIpAdarAja. (In Kannada, a sanyAsi is called "SrIpAdangalu" or "SrIgalu", so ShrIpAdarAjaru literally means king of sanyAsIs).

ShrIpAdarAjaru had "sukha prArabdha" i.e., he was destined to live like a king even though he was a saint. Needless to add, he was at heart a total ascetic whose mind was pegged at the lotus feet of Gopalakrishna, but his prArbdha karma forced him to enjoy rAjavaibhOga. It is said that he once gave up his regular ways when some misguided persons objected; then so many untoward things happened that the same persons begged him to go back to his regular ways.

ShrIpAdarAjaru was one of the pillars of the haridAsa movement. He popularised the practice of composing kannada devaranAmAs, steeped in bhakti. Some of his famous devaranAmAs are: "nI ittahange iruvEnO hariyE ...", "KangaLidyatako kAvEri rangana nODada..", "bhUshanake bhUshana ...". His ankitha is "Ranga ViThThala".

The saint has his brindAvana at a place called narasimha tIrtha, about 1.5 km from Mulabagilu, on NH4 (old Bangalore-Madras highway). It is said, when he was at his old age, he wanted to have Ganga-snana and could not go so far. Then Ganga appeared before him and said that she would come to narasimha tIrtha and stay there for ever. Sripadaraja's devotees were extremely happy to have ganga-snana without much effort. From that time onwards, taking a bath in narasimha tIrtha is equivalent to having a bath in the ganga.

stOtrAs (hymns) in praise of shrIpAdarAja

"tam vandE narasimha tIrTha nilayam shrI vyAsarAja pUjitam
dhAyantam manasa nrusimha charaNam shrIpAdarAjam gurun"

(I pray to guru shrIpAdarAja, the one who resides in narasimha tIrtha, and was revered by vyAsaraja, and who always worships the feet of narasimha)

"shrI pUrNabOdha gurupUjita gOpinAtha
bAhyAntarAna varatArchana tatparAya
shrI ranga viThThala hayAnana pUjakAya
shrIpAdarAja guruvEstu namah shubhAya"

(Glory to guru shrIpAdarAja, who is forever immersed in the devotion of the Lord gOpinAtha, who was worshipped by Sri madhvAchArya, and in the worship of ranga viThThala and hayagrIva)

If you chant this in the morning, you will have a very good day and in addition, get good food also!

"namah shrIpAdarAjAya namastE vyAsa yOgine
namah purandarAryAya vijayAryAya te namaha"

This stotra is recited at the beginning of any traditional Harikatha discourse; it salutes 4 great individuals who contributed a lot to the haridAsa movement - shrIpAdarAjaru, vyAsarAjaru, purandara dAsaru and vijaya dAsaru.

Other references:

Karnataka Bhakta Vijaya - Sri Belur Keshavadasaru
Sripadaraja Samputa - Prof. Aralumallige Parthasarathy

ITRANS version of stotra

There are several pATAntaras of the stotra. By and large, this document adheres to the version outlined in the reference book is followed. It also agrees, to a

very large degree, with the version provided by Sri Beluru Keshavadasaru in his monumental work - Karnataka Bhakta Vijaya. And most importantly, this is the version that is displayed near the mUla brindavana of shrI shrIpAdarAjaru in muLbAgilu.

shrI guru shrIpAdarAja virachita madhvanAma

jaya jaya jagatrANa, jagadoLage sutrANa
akhila guNa sadhdhAma madhvanAma

Ava kachchhapa rUpa dinda lanDOdakava
Ovi dharisida shEShamUrutiyanu
Avavana baLiviDidu hariya suraraiduvaro
A vAyu namma kula guru rAyanu || 1 ||

Avavanu dEhadoLagiralu hari tA nelesihanu
Avavanu tolage hari tA tolaguva
Avavanu dEhadoLahorage niyAmakanu
A vAyu namma kula guru rAyanu || 2 ||

karaNAbhimAni suraru dEhava biDalu
kuruDa kivuDa mUkanendenisuva
parama mukhyaprANa tolagaLA dehavanu
aritu peNanendu peLvaru budhajana || 3 ||

suraroLage nararoLage sarvabhUtagaLoLage
parataranenisi nEmadi (niyAmisi) nelesiha
hariyanallade bageyanannyanaru lOkadoLu
gurukulatilaka mukhya pavamAnanu || 4 ||

hanumanta avatAra

trEteyali raghupatiya sEve mADuvenendu
vAtasuta hanumantanendenisida
pOtabhAvadi taraNibimbake langhisida
ItageNe yAru mUrloKadoLage || 5 ||

taraNigabhimukhavAgi shabdashAstrava paThisi
uravaNisi hindumundAgi naDeda
parama pavamAna udayAsta shailagaLA
bharadi aidida EtagupameyunTE || 6 ||

akhiLavEdagaLa sArava paThisidanu munnalli
nikhiLa vyAkaraNagaLa iva peLida
mukhadalli kinchidapashabda ivagillEndu
mukhyaprANananu rAmananukarisida || 7 ||

taraNisutananu kAyda sharadhiyanu neredATi
dharaNisuteyaLa kanDu danujaroDane
bharadi raNavanemADi gelidu divyAstragaLa
uruhi lankeya banda hanumantanu || 8 ||

harige chUDaMaNiyanittu harigaLa kUDi
sharadhiyanu kaTTi bahu rakkasaranu
orisi raNadali dashashirana huDiguTTi tA
mereda hanumanta balavanta dhIra || 9 ||

uragabandhake siluki kapivararu mai mareye
taraNikulatilakanAgneyane tALi
girisahita sanjIvanava kittu tanditta (tandiTTa)
harivarage sariyunTe hanumantage || 10 ||

vijaya raghupati mechchi dharaNisuteyaLigIye
bhajisi mouktikada hAravanu paDeda
ajapadaviyanu rAma koDuvenene hanumanta
nijabhakutiyane bEDi varava paDeda || 11 ||

bhIma avatAra

A mArutane bhImanenisi dvAparadi
sOMakuladalli janisi pArtharoDane
bhImavikrama rakkasara muridoTTida
A mahima namma kulagururAyanu || 12 ||

karadinda shishubhAvanAda bhImana biDalu
giriyoDedu shatashrungavendenesitu
harigaLa harigaLim karigaLa karigaLim
areda vIranige sura nararu sariye || 13 ||

kurupa garaLavanikke nereyunDu tEgi
uragagaLa mElbiDalu adanorasida
aragina maneyalli uriyanikkalu dhIra
dharisi jAhnavigoyda tannanujara || 14 ||

allidda baka hiDimbakaremba rakkasara
nilladorisida lOkakanTakaranu
ballidasurara gelidu droupadi karaviDidu
yella sujanarige haruShava bIrida || 15 ||

rAjakula vajranenisida mAgadhana sILi
rAjasUyayAgavanu mADisidanu
AjiyoLu kouravara balava savaruvenendu
mUjagavariye kankaNakaTTida || 16 ||

dAnavara savarabEkendu byAga
mAnanidhi droupadiya manadingitavanaritu
kAnanava pokku kimmIrAdigaLa muridu
mAninige sougandhikavane tanda || 17 ||

duruLa kIchakanu droupadiya cheluvikege
maruLAgI karakariya mADalavana
garaDimaneyoLu barasi orisi avananvayava
kurupanaTTida mallakulava savarida || 18 ||

kouravara bala savari vairigaLa neggotti
Orante kouravana muridu mereda
vairi dushyAsanana raNadali eDegeDehi (toDeya laDDageDahi)
vIranarahariya lIleya tOrida || 19 ||

gurusutanu sangaradi nArAyaNAstravanu
uravaNisi biDalu shastrava bisuTaru
harikRupeya paDedirda bhIma hunkAradali
hariya divyAstravanu nere aTTida || 20 ||

chanDavikrama gadegonDu raNadoLage bhU
manDaladoLidirAdanta khaLaranella
hinDi bisuTida vrukOdarana pratApavanu
kanDu nilluvarAru tribhuvanadoLu || 21 ||

nArirOdana kELi manamarugi gurusutana
hArhiDidu shirOratna kitti tegeda
nIroLaDagidda duryOdhanana horageDahi
Uruyuga tanna gadeyinda murida || 22 ||

madhva avatAra

dAnavaru kaliyugadoLavatarisi vibhudaroLu
vEnana matavanaruhaladanaritu
gyAni tA pavamAna bhUtaLadoLavatarisi
mAnanidhi madhvAkhyanendenisida || 23 ||

arbhakatanadoLaidi badariyali madhvamuni
nirbhayadi sakala shAstragaLa paThisida
urviyoLu mAye bIralu tatvamArgavanu
(urviyoLu AmnAya tatvada mAArgavanu)
Orva madhvamuni tOrda sujanarge
(sarva sujanarige aruhidanu mOdadi) || 24 ||

sarvEsha hara, vishwa ella tA pusiyeмба
durvAdigaLa matava nere khanDisi
sarvEsha hari, vishwa satyavendaruhida
sharvAdigIrvaNa santatiyali || 25 ||

Ekavimshati kubhAShyagaLa bEranu taridu
shrIkarArchitanolume shAstra rachisi
lOkatrayadoLidda suraru Alisuvante
A kamalanAbhayati nikaragoreda || 26 ||

badarikAshramake punarapiyaidi vyAsamuni
padakeragi akhila vedArthagaLanu
padumanAbhana mukhadi tiLidu brahmatvavaidida
madhvamunirAyagabhivandipe || 27 ||

jaya jayatu durvAdimatatimira mArtAnDa
jaya jayatu vAdigajapanchAnana
jaya jayatu chArvAkagarvaparvata kulisha
jaya jayatu jagannAtha madwanAtha || 28 ||

tungakulaguruvarana hrutkamaladoLu nelesi
bhangavillada sukhava sujanakella
hingade koDuva guru madhwAntarAtmaka
rangaviThThalanendu nere sArirai || 29 ||

jagannAthadAsara phala stuti

sOmasUryOparAgadi gO sahasragaLa
bhUmidEvarige suranadiya taTadi
shrI mukundArpaNavenuta koTTa phalamakku
I madhvanAma baredOdidarge || 30 ||

putrarilladavaru satputraraiduvaru

sarvatradali digvijayavahudu sakala
shatrugaLu keDuvaru apamrutyu baralanjuvudu
sUtranAmakana samstuti mAtradi || 31 ||

shrIpAdarAja peLida madhvanAma
santApa kaLedakhiLasoukhyavanIvudu
shrIpati shrI jagannAthaviThThalana tOri bhava
kUpAradinda kaDehAyisuvudu || 32 ||

||shrIkRiShNArpaNamastu||

Opening Verse:

<i>jaya jaya jagatrANa jagadoLage sutrANa akhiLa guNa sadhhdhAma madhvanAma</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

jaya jaya = (a prayer to) cause good fortune for all of us
jagatrANa = the sustainer of the world
jagadoLage = in the world
sutrANa = most powerful
akhiLa = all
guNa = (good) qualities
sadhhdhAma = good residence
madhvanAma = the one bearing the name of madhva

Quick Meaning:

May he grant us good fortune, the one who provides sustenance to the world, who is the most powerful amongst all jIvas, the abode of all (good) qualities, the one bearing the name Madhwa.

Or

Victory (or Hail) to the one who provides sustenance to the world, who is the most powerful amongst all jIvas, the abode of all (good) qualities, the one bearing the name Madhwa

Discussion:

jaya jaya:

shrIpAdarAjaru begins his poem with a quick prayer to vAyu to bring about mangaLa (auspiciousness) to all of us. This is very appropriate because scriptures describe vAyu as "parama mangaLa svarUpa" (the embodiment of auspiciousness), "pradhAna anga" (primary arm) of hari.

"jaya" also means victory. The biggest victory that any jIva (sentient being) can hope for is mOksha or mukti (liberation from the cycle of birth and death). vAyu helps deserving souls reach this goal in a variety of ways - by providing correct gyAna (knowledge) about the Lord, inspiring correct thoughts and actions, and finally recommending the soul's case to the Lord. After hari and lakshmi, vAyu (and brahma) has the power to propel a soul towards liberation.

"jaya" also means supreme or the highest. This too is appropriate since vAyu is considered jIvOttama (the highest amongst all jIvas).

jagatrANa:

The shAstrAs tell us that vAyu keeps reciting the hansa mantra "hamsah sOham svAha" about 21600 times every day in all souls, offering this to hamsanAmaka paramAtma (hari). As long as vAyu is in the body, it is considered alive; once he departs, it is termed dead. That is why he is regarded as "jagatrANa" - the one who provides sustenance to the world.

trANa can also be interpreted to protect or shelter. And that is true too, since he protects all worthy jIvas (and punishes bad ones). His power extends to even gods that others worship,

balamindrasya girishO girishasya balam marut
balam tasya harissAkshAt naharErbala manyatah
(mahabharata tAtparya nirNaya Canto 2 Verse 162)

[The strength of Indra is girisha (rudra), girishA's strength is marut (vAyu). vAyu's strength is hari Himself. hari derives His strength from nobody.]

If vAyu is the source for rudrA's strength (and by inference for the rest of the gods too) then it is obvious "jagatrANa" is a very apt epithet for him.

jagadoLage sutrANa:

The shAstrAs tell us that the human body is made up of 24 tattvAs or elements. These elements are basically inert. In order to provide life to the body and make it active, 24 tatvAbhimani dEvatAs (gods who are patrons of senses or organs) enter the body and provide its basic functions. The controller for these dEvatAs is vAyu. hari inspires vAyu, and vAyu inspires everybody else. Since, hari and vAyu are thus responsible for the sustenance of the entire universe they are also called "sutrANa" (this epithet is primarily hari's, but can be used for vAyu too).

akhiLa guNa sadhdhAma

There are 2 points to be considered:

hari is known as pUrNa guNa or akhiLa guNa, the embodiment of all good qualities. vAyu is His sadhdhAma or chief abode (or temple). Thus vAyu is akhiLa guNa sadhdhAma. The ATarvaNOPanishat says "sa vEdaitat parmam brahmaDhAma".

In his commentary on the word "brahmadhAma" srimadAchArya has said "pradhAnam dhAma vishnOstu prANa Eva prakIrtitah". This is based on the "brahmasAra".

vAyu is akhiLa guNa too, but to a lesser degree as compared to hari. vAyu is jIvOttama or the best amongst jIvas. Thus the good qualities that are manifest in jIvas are at their peak in vAyu. shrImadAchArya says :

"gyAnE virAge haribhaktibhAve dhRuti sthiti prANa baleprayOgE
buddhoucha nAnyO hanumatsamAnah pumAn kadAchit kvacha kashchanaiva
tatvagyaNe viShNubhaktou dhairyE sthairyE parAkrame
vEgE cha lAgave chaiva pralApsyA cha varjane
bhImasEna samOnAsti sEnayOrubhayArOpi

pAndityEcha paTutvEcha shUrtvEcha balEpi cha"
(mahAbhArata tAtparya nirNaya Canto 3 Verse 155, 165)

In knowledge, renunciation, devotion towards Hari, firmness, stability, exertion of power, intelligence, there never was a human equal to hanuman, anywhere, anytime. In correct spiritual knowledge, devotion towards vishnu, control over the body, boldness, strength, swiftness, being able to squeeze into a tiny space, ability to jump over long distances, discarding useless talk, expertise, oratory, courage, there is nobody equal to bhImasEna in both the armies)

That is why shrI trivikrama panditAchArya addresses vAyu as
'shrImadvishNavanghrinishTAtiguNa".

madhvanAma:

It is intriguing why shrIpAdarAjaru has used the name "madhva" instead of other equivalent terms. This is to draw our attention to the baLitthAsUkta

"niryadIm budhnAnmahishasya varpasa IshAnAsah
shavasA kranta sUrayah yadimanu pradivO madhva AdhavE
guhA santam mAtarishwA mathAyati "

[it was from this omniscient vAyu that rudra and other gods easily learnt about the qualities of the supreme lord hari and obtained liberation from bondage. He (madhva) churned the scriptures and showed us the supremacy of hari, who resides in the hearts of everybody]

P.S : the reference book provides a lot more details substantiating the epithets used in this verse. For the sake of brevity only the more prominent ones have been used; interested readers may refer this book for the full details.

Verse 1:

<p><i>Ava kachchhapa rUpa dinda lanDOdakava Ovi dharisida shEShamUrutiyanu Avavana baLiviDidu hariya suraraiduvaro A vAyu namma kula guru rAyanu</i></p>

Word-by-word Meaning:

Ava = by which
kachchhapa = tortoise
rUpa = form or shape
dinda = from
lanDOdakava = the fluid that permeates brahmAnDa (universe)
Ovi = easily
dharisida = he carried
shEShamUrutiyanu = the form of shEsha
Avavana = whose
baLiviDidu = by staying near
hariya = Hari
suraraiduvaro = the gods reach or attain
A = that
vAyu = vAyu (is)
namma = our

kula = sect
guru = guru or preceptor
rAyanu = king or chief

Quick Translation:

The one who took on the shape of a tortoise and supported Sesha, by staying near whom lesser gods reach hari, that vAyu is the chief amongst the gurus of our sect or lineage.

Discussion:

Ava kachchhapa

According to the shAstrAs, the lord is holding up the whole universe as vishnu kUrma. In the fluid that permeates brahmAnDa, vAyu is also present as vAyu kUrma, holding on to the tail of vishnu kUrma. sEsha is hanging to the tail of vAyu and is supporting the Earth on his hood.

sa ESha kUrmarUpENa vAyuranDODake sthitah
viShNunA kUrmarUpENa dhAritOanantadhArakah (iti prabhanjanE)

vAyOstu kUrmarUpasya pUrvatashyODake mukham
AgnEyaishAnigou bAhU pAdou nirruti vAyugou
(iti prakrushte bruhaDAraNyakOpanishadbhAshya)

The four limbs of the vAyu kUrma (tortoise) rest on the four corners of brahmAnDa. The chest is pressing against the Earth, the stomach supports AkAsha (space) and the back supports other worlds.

[The reference to sEsha supporting the earth on his hood needs to be interpreted symbolically. The planets in our solar system (and all other heavenly bodies) are held in their place by the sun's gravitational pull. Thus in a way, the entire system is held in place by some sort of attraction. And sure enough, another name for sEsha is sankarshana (one who does Akarshana or attraction).]

Avavana baLiviDidu hariya suraraiduvaro

The previous section quoted details of the baLitthAsUkta which outlines how rudra and other gods easily learnt about the qualities of hari and obtained liberation from bondage.

The sumadhva vijayA tells us that the gods regularly turned up (in the sky) to listen to srimadAchAryA's discourse on the shAstrAs. In harikathAmrutasAra, sri jagannAtha dAsaru provides details of the manner in which rudra learnt the shAstrAs from vAyu.

Let us look at the mahABhArata and rAmAyaNa. sugrIva and karNa were both amshAs of the sun (a mild form of incarnation), yet they met with different treatments at the hands of the Lord; sugrIva benefitted immensely from rAma, whereas karNa was punished. The answer to this seeming paradox is given by srimadAchArya

"sa mArutikrute raviyam raraksha" (MBTN canto 5 verse 46)
child of sun (sugrIva) was protected (by rAma) only because he was with
hanumanta.

"bhImArthamEva raviyam nihatya" (MBTN canto 5 verse 47)

It was because of (enimty with) bhIma that (another) offspring of the sun (karNa) was killed (by krishna).

A similar reversal is seen in the case of vAli and arjuna. Here again, the key was the relationship that vAli and arjuna had with hanumanta and bhIma respectively. This illustrates the point that getting the grace of vAyu is a sure-shot way of getting the grace of hari.

This feeling has been beautifully captured by purandara dasaru in his song, "hanumana matavE hariya matavu, hariya matavE hanumana matavu".

A vAyu namma kula guru rAyanu

The scriptures say that Hari can independently grant liberation, whereas vAyu (and brahma) can recommend eligible jIvas for liberation. Sometimes, on hari's authority, they can even grant liberation. The scriptures also say that brahma, vAyu, saraswati and bhArati are the only ones (apart from lakshmi and hari) whose knowledge is always perfect and who are never subject to any form of defect or imperfection. Thus is it any surprise that lesser gods flock to them to know more about hari?

This leads us to the conclusion that the word "kula" used by shrIpAdarAjaru should not be narrowly interpreted to mean just the mAdhva community. It includes all gods, other celestial beings, saints, good and noble people. In fact it includes every jIva or sentient being who is eligible for mOksha (liberation). Thus vAyu is the chief guru of all sAtvika jIvAs. This is why in the very first verse of vAyu stuti, trivikramapanDitAchArya calls him "trailOkAchArya".

Another interesting point. shrIpAdarAjaru is also indirectly showing the position of vAyu (brahma) in the hierarchy of gods.

points to ponder:

If "staying near vAyu" can be interpreted as "staying on the path laid down by vAyu or staying close to the principles dear to vAyu" then it follows that having faith in and following madhva shAstra in letter and spirit is the right royal road to hari, i.e., moksha or liberation!

Verse 2:

<i>Avavanu dEhadoLagiralu hari tA nelesihanu</i>
<i>Avavanu tolage hari tA tolaguva</i>
<i>Avavanu dEhadoLahorage niyAmakanu</i>
<i>A vAyu namma kula guru rAyanu</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

Avavanu = he who
dEhadoLagiralu = when he stays in the body
hari = Hari
tA nelesihanu = he stays
Avavanu = he who
tolage = when (he) departs
hari tA tolaguva = hari also departs
Avavanu = he who

dEhada = the body
oLahorage = inside and outside
niyAmakanu = controller or regulator
A = that
vAyu = vAyu (is)
namma = our
kula = sect
guru = guru or preceptor
rAyanu = king or chief

Quick Translation:

As long he resides in the body, Hari remains or resides in the body, as soon as he departs, Hari departs from the body. He (vAyu) is the controller or regulator inside and outside the body; he is the chief amongst the gurus of our sect.

Discussion:

Avavanu dEhadoLagiralu hari tA nelesihanu Avavanu tolage hari tA tolaguva

There is a shruti vAkya in this connection (unfortunately I don't have more details):

"kasmin vahamutkrAnta utkramishyAmi, kasminvaham sthite sthAsyAmi iti sa prANamasRujatra"

[The Lord created vAyu with these words, "I will create such a devotee that his departure will bring about my departure, his presence will indicate my presence"].

There is another pramANa in this regard, but since that is more relevant to the next verse, it has been quoted in the next posting.

There are 2 aspects that need to be noted in the actual words used by shrIpAdarAjaru:

1. The unequivocal and forthright manner in which the statement has been made; there are no ifs and buts, and no room for any ambiguity whatsoever. There is no reference to other gods, dependencies, or other pre-conditions. The linkage between hari and vAyu is direct and self-standing.
2. A double linkage has been used, i.e., presence of vAyu to presence of hari, and departure (or absence) of vAyu to departure (or absence) of hari. This is very similar to what is commonly used in scientific parlance as "necessary and sufficient condition"

Interpreting this linkage in the context of the physical body is straightforward and well documented in the scriptures. However, I would like to submit a more interesting possibility by extending this logic to the mind as well, i.e., consider that as long as vAyu is in the mind, hari is there too, and once vAyu leaves the mind, hari leaves too.

What exactly does "vAyu in the mind" mean? I submit that this means the following:

- constantly meditating on vAyu, his glory and greatness

- believing with heart and soul the fact that he is jIvOttama (and his position in the hierarchy)
- following the principles enunciated by vAyu (madhva) himself, i.e., following tattvada/dvaita concepts in letter and spirit, in thought and action, in the manner

From the above it follows that tattvada/dvaita is the correct and most practical approach to achieving hari's grace, and more importantly, hari abandons everybody who abandons vAyu.

Avavanu dEhadoLahorage niyAmakanu

Lest we come to the wrong conclusion that vAyu's lordship is limited to the body, shrIpAdarAjaru hastens to remind us of what is said in the paingu shruti.

"prANasmEtad vashE sarvam prANah paravashe sthitah na parah kinchidAshritya vartate paramOyatah"

Everything (apart from natural exclusions like hari, lakshmi, brahma) is in the control of prANa (another name for vAyu). In turn, prANa is under the control of hari. hari is under nobody's control, even to a small degree, and this has always been the case.

It is said that the pinDAnDa (or body) is a miniature of brahmAnDa (the universe). That is, the same gods who control different organs and senses of the body control other parts of the universe. Since they are all subject to the control of vAyu, it follows that vAyu's power and potency is intact all over brahmAnDa and pinDAnDa.

Verse 3

<i>karaNAbhimAni suraru dEhava biDalu kuruDa kivuDa mUkanendenisuva parama mukhyaprANa tolagala dehavanu aritu peNanendu pELvaru budhajana</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

karaNAbhimAni = regulators or patrons of senses
suraru = gods
dEhava = the body
biDalu = depart from
kuruDa = blind
kivuDa = deaf
mUka = dumb
nendenisuva = to be called or named
parama = supreme or the main
mukhyaprANa = the primary life breath
tolagala = (when) departs
dEhavanu = the body
aritu = knowingly
peNanendu = as a corpse
pELvaru = to say
budhajana = wise or knowledgeable people

Quick Translation:

When gods who regulate the senses and organs depart from a person's body, that person (becomes impaired in that sense or organ, and is accordingly) called blind, deaf or dumb. However, when mukhyaprANa leaves the body, the wise call such a body a corpse.

Discussion

shrIpAdarAjaru is drawing our attention to the aitarEya upanishad statement:

"tA ahimsant ahamuktha masmaihamukthamasmIti tA abruvan
hantAsmAchCharIrAdutkrAmAma tadyasmin
na utkAnta idam sharIram patsyati taduktham bhaviShyatIti vAgudakrAmad
avadannashnan pibannAstaiva
chakshurudakrAmad apashyannashnan pibannAstaiva"

Once the gods had a dispute amongst themselves as who was the greatest. They decided that the best way to judge the issue was to observe the impact on the body. The gods started entering a lifeless body one-by-one. None of them made an impact, the body remained as it was. As soon as vAyu entered the body, it perked up. Now the whole thing was reversed, and the gods started leaving the body one-by-one. As each god left, the sense or organ he/she regulated failed. Yet the body was alive and continued to eat and drink. When vAyu left the body, it collapsed. This conclusively established the total dependence of the jiVa on vAyu, and thereby his superiority vis-a-vis other gods, making his title of 'jIvOttama' appropriate.

Another related pramANa (supporting evidence) is also from the itarEya upanishad.

"prANa udakrAmat tatprANa utkrAntEapadyata tad AshIryata AshArItI
tachCharIramabhavat"

When prANa departed from the body, it collapsed, and started decaying.

We observe this in the world around us too. As long as a person is breathing, he or she is considered to be alive; death occurs only when he or she stops breathing. In fact, if a doctor is around when death happens, he or she tries CPR, or electrical shock, and anything else to get the body to breathe again.

It is said that when a person dies, the amshAs (residue) of gods regulating senses and organs go back to the original deity. However, this is not true in the case of vAyu. He carries paramAtma and the jiVa on his shoulders to the next body.

When this verse is read along with the previous verse (i.e., as long as vAyu resides in the body, hari also resides, when vAyu leaves hari also leaves), it really shows the position of vAyu in the hierarchy of gods, and how much hari cares for him.

Like the previous verse, this too has symbolic significance; for the "spiritual" body to be alive, the presence of vAyu is very important. In other words, any mode of worship that does not accord primacy to vAyu (and of course, hari, lakshmi, brahma) and the principles enunciated by him is irretrievably flawed and doomed to end in despair.

Verse 4:

*suraroLage nararoLage sarvabhUtagaLoLage
parataranenisi nEmadi nelesiha
hariyanallade bageyanannyaranu lOkadoLu
gurukulatilaka mukhya pavamAnanu*

Word-by-word Meaning:

suraroLage = amongst gods
nararoLage = amongst humans
sarvabhUtagaLoLage = amongst all elements
parataranenisi = to be known as the most important
nEmadi = in strict order
nelesiha = to stay or reside
hariyanallade = other than Hari
bageyanannyaranu - bageya + annyaranu = does not submit or defer to others
lOkadoLu = in the world
gurukulatilaka = guru + kula + tilaka = crown jewel in the line of preceptors
mukhya = chief
pavamAnanu = pavamana (a name for vAyu)

Quick Translation:

Amongst gods, amongst humans, amongst all elements, he resides as the controller and regulator. He does not respect or defer to anybody other than Hari (and lakshmi, of course) in the world. He is mukhya pavamAna, the crown jewel amongst preceptors.

Discussion:

suraroLage nararoLage sarvabhUtagaLoLage parataranenisi nEmadi nelesiha

There are several supporting pramANAs for this, one of them being the paingu shruti quoted earlier:

"prANasmEtad vashE sarvam prANah paravashe sthitah na parah kinchidAshritya vartate paramOyatah"

Everything (apart from natural exclusions like hari, lakshmi, brahma etc.) is in the control of prANA (another name for vAyu). In turn, prANa is under the control of hari. hari is under nobody's control, even to a small degree, and this has always been the case.

There is another way of looking at this. In the beginning, hari and lakshmi (as prakriti or nature) created the three primary constituents of brahmAnda - satva, rajas and tamo gunas (qualities). Using the three gunas, the Lord created mahat tattva as the primary building block; this in turn, gave rise to ahankAra tattva, and the rest of the tattvas. The abhimAni dEvatAs (patron gods) for mahattatva are brahma and vAyu (and their wives saraswati and bhArati), and for ahankAra tattva it is garuda, sEsha, rudra (and their wives souparaNi, vAruNi and pArvati). Since mahat tattva is one of the key elements in the chain of creation, it is appropriate that vAyu is designated as the primary representative of hari in the body. He presides over other gods and ensures that everything happens in accordance with hari's desires and directions.

hariyanallade bageyanannyanaru lOkadoLu

It follows directly from the paingu shruti quoted above that vAyu does not have to answer to anybody else in the hierarchy other than hari (and lakshmi). shrIpAdarAjaru says this explicitly to make sure we get the point. The same has been stated by srimadAchArya too:

"nAnyadEva natAstEna vAsudEvAnna pUjitah" (mahabhArata tAtparya nirNaya 18 canto, verse 16)

Other than vAsudEva (hari), bhImasEna has never prayed to any other god, even once. [This would be true for all incarnations of vAyu).

How does one reconcile this with instances in rAmAyaNa and mahAbhArata where incarnations of vAyu respect or obey people other than hari and lakshmi (for example sugrIva, bhIshma, drONa, etc)? There is an important concept behind this behavior. Since vAyu is jivOttama, he has to set examples of appropriate behavior for lesser jIvas to emulate. Thus he shows respect to his king/leader (sugrIva), his teacher (drONa) and his great-granduncle (bhIshma) etc. In the gIta too, krishna says that everybody looks upto Him as an example and that is why He too performs certain duties.

gurukulatilaka mukhya pavamAnanu

The first thing that strikes one about this is the fact that shrIpAdarAjaru has abandoned the word "namma kula" (our sect), in favor of "gurukula". This is to draw our attention to one key concept of tattvavAda i.e., tAratamya or hierarchy of creation. Interested readers may refer the dvaita home page for more information about this concept.

The aspect of tAratamya relevant here is that each class in the hierarchy can and should act as teachers to the classes below it, i.e, members of a class can look upto members of the class above them for guidance and knowledge. So, symbolically speaking, there is a long hierarchy of gurus, extending all the way back to hari.

Hari is the Adi (first or primary) guru; he is the guru of all gurus, for all of creation, in the past, present and future. His immediate disciples are vAyu and brahma (and their spouses); in turn, these two are the gurus for garuda, sEsha, rudra (and their spouses), and so on. Thus, as stated in the previous verse, vAyu may be considered the primary guru for for all sAtvikas (good souls). shrIpAdarAjaru has put it poetically by calling him the the crown jewel of the line of preceptors (gurukula tilaka).

Verse 5:

<p><i>trEteyali raghupatiya sEve mADuvenendu vAtasuta hanumantanendenisida pOtabhAvadi taraNibimbake langhisida ItageNe yAru mUr1OkadoLage</i></p>

Word-by-word Meaning:

trEteyali = in trEta yuga (the second Yuga)
raghupatiya sEve = service of raghupathi (rAma)
mADuvenendu = saying that I will do

vAtasuta = son of vAyu (hanumanta)
hanumantanendenisida = became hanumanta
pOtabhAvadi = in childish exuberance
taraNibimbake = image of the sun
langhisida = jumped
ItageNe = equal (or superior) to him
yAru = who
mUrloKadoLage = in all the three worlds

Quick Translation:

In trEta yuga, in order to serve Raghupathi, the son of Vayu became hanumanta. Out of sheer childish exuberance he jumped at the sun. Who can match or exceed him in all the 3 worlds?

Discussion:

trEteyali raghupatiya sEve mADuvenendu

srImadAchArya says:

"niShEvaNAyOruguNasya | sa dEvatAnA prathamO guNAdhikO babhUva nAmnA hanumAn
prabhanjanah"
(MBTN - Canto 3, Verse 67)

To serve hari, full of all auspicious attributes, vAyu, the first amongst gods and having auspicious attributes more than others, took birth as a monkey named hanuman.

This was true of all the other gods too; all of them incarnated on the earth in order to serve the Lord. This was not because He needed any help, but because He wanted to give them a chance to serve him. (If you try to look for the contribution of other gods in the previous avatars you will find nothing, like looking for the stars at high noon!)

vAtasuta hanumantanendenisida

There is an interesting aspect here that I wish to draw your attention to - the use of "hanumanta" instead of other alternatives like 'AnjanEya', "mAruti", "vAyu-putra" etc. Look at the hari vAyu stuti, and see how trivikrama panditAchArya addresses the first avatAra of vAyu for the first time - "vande ham tam hanumAniti". This is because of the meaning of the word "hanu".

"hanashabdO gyAna vAchI hanumAn matishabditah" (bhAvavRutta)

"hanu" means gyAna or knowledge, therefore "hanuman" means a very intelligent person. This statement has been used by srImadAchArya in several of his bAshyas. In another stotra ("manOjavam"), hanumanta is called "buddimatAm varishtam" the best or highest amongst all intelligent beings.

pOtabhAvadi taraNibimbake langhisida

There is a popular story that the babu hanumanta mistook the sun to be a fruit and jumped to grab it. Indra hit him with his vajrAyudha (missile) and that is how hanumanta's cheeks became swollen. I am not sure how much of credibility to attach to this story. For example, mistaking the sun for a fruit is a sign of ignorance and that is something that no incarnation of vAyu ever has. Secondly,

why would indra hurl his missile at vAyu, somebody who is his parama-guru, his superior in tAratamya (hierarchy), and the most powerful jIva to boot? Even assuming that indra was capable of such a foolish act, how can the vajrAyudha make a dent in hanumanta's body, something that even the most powerful asuras (demons) and missiles could not do? So, I am forced to conclude that either the story is jsut a myth, or it was all "acting" to deceive asuras. This becomes even more obvious when one looks at the very next line in the stotra. I am requesting learned readers to comment on this aspect.

ItageNe yAru mUrlOkadoLage

This is another way of stating that vAyu is jIvottama.

If I may be a permitted a little artistic licence, I would like to think that shrIpAdarAjaru's mind must have been on the hari vAyustuti which praises hanumanta "mahita mahApouruShO bAhushAli, ...". He is trying to tell us that when one tries to grasp all of hanuman's great attributes - his strength, intelligence, devotion, steadfastness, etc. - one realizes that one lifetime is too small to get a full measure of his greatness, and one has to satisfy oneself with the thought that "there never was, is or will be anybody like him in all the three worlds".

Verse 6:

<i>taraNigabhimukhavAgi shabdashAstrava paThisi uravaNisi hindumundAgi naDeda parama pavamAna udayAsta shailagaLA bharadi aidida EtagupameyunTE</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

taraNigabhimukhavAgi = taranIge + abhimukavagi = facing the sun
shabdashAstrava = shabda + shAstrava
paThisi = (after) reciting
uravaNasi = quickly
hindumundAgi = backwards
naDeda = walked
parama = primary or supreme
pavamAna = vAyu
udayAsta = rising and setting
shailagaLA = hills
bharadi aidida = reached quickly
EtagupameyunTE = Itage + upame + unTE = Is there an example (equal) for him?

Quick Translation:

Facing the sun, he walked backwards and learnt the shAstras from the sun, moving from the rising hills to the setting hills. Is there any comparison to him?

Discussion:

taraNigabhimukhavAgi shabdashAstrava paThisi uravaNisi hindumundAgi naDeda

hanumanta approached the Sun to teach him grammar, logic and the shAstras. The Sun told him that he could not pause on his journey from East to West and so he could teach hanumanta only if he could keep pace with him. hanumanta agreed.

Every day, at sunrise he would jump to the hills on the East where the Sun would rise, and walk backwards on the sky, always facing the Sun, until the Sun set in the west.

The first point to note is that the Sun is a jIva whereas hanumanta is jIvOttama. In other words, there is nothing that the Sun knows, which hanumanta doesn't. So there is no question of the Sun teaching hanumanta. Also, as stated by srimadAchArya (documented in the posting of Verse 4) there is no possibility of hanumanta worshipping anybody other than the Lord. So, the teacher that hanumanta faced was Lord hari inside the Sun.

Second, hanumanta is pUrnapragna (one whose knowledge and awareness is complete and perfect). It is said vAyu (and brahma) can get full knowledge about anything (or anyone) in the universe by just thinking about that person or object; the only exception is matters concerning hari and lakshmi. So, there is no question of hanumanta learning something as mundane as grammar or logic. All of this is pretense, to teach the rest of thus that everybody, one matter how exalted, has to learn from a guru. This is the same reason why rAma and krishna needed a teacher, and bhIma needed drONa.

So, in all, it maybe concluded that hanumanta learnt shastras from Narayana, seated in Suryamandala as described in the shloka:

dhyeassada savitru mandala madhyavarti | Narayana:h sarasijasana sannivishta:h
Keyuravan makarakundalavan kiritee Haree | hiranmayavapurdruta shanka chakra:h

Narayana is seated on a lotus pedestal in the middle of the sun's circular appearance, bedecked with ornaments and holding the conch and the disc. This is the form of Narayana one should concentrate upon.

The reason for his going along with the sun backwards is for facing his Guru and the Lord.

In the Dwaparayuga, when he was Bhima he had shrI Vedavyasa as his guru. When shrI Krishna was giving "gitOpadEsha", bhIma, who was in the Pandava army, was listening to it. Also at the same time, he was sitting as Hanuman in the flag of the chariot.

In the Gita Bhashya, Srimadacharya has stated 'devam Narayanam natva sarva dosha vivarjitam Paripurnam Gurunschan Gitartham vakshyami lesatah' by which he has stated that his guru is nArAyaNa, the Lord Himself.

In Sumadhva Vijaya it is stated that when vAsudeva was chided by his guru that he was not attentive in the class, he repeated the lesson that was being taught, as well as the portions preceeding and following it. When shrI achyuta prEksharu was teaching Bhagavata, shrI madhvAchArya identified which of the different versions of the text being used was the correct one. When questioned about it, he said that he knew all that from his previous births.

Thus shrImadAchArya has clearly stated that all his knowledge is from nArAyaNa and his avatara as vEdavyAsa.

parama pavamAna udayAsta shailagaLA bharadi aidida EtagupameyunTE

The use of the phrase 'parama pavamAna'. Here parama indicates primacy amongst jIvas (i.e., hanumanta being jIvOttama). pavamAna indicates, among other things, purity or lack of blemishes or defects (like ignorance). So, by using this

phrase, shrIpAdarAjaru is sort of telling us "remember that we are talking about jIvottama himself, so dont get deluded into thinking that he learnt shAstras from the Sun".

Another aspect to be noted is that the pace set by the Sun is so hectic that he himself has no time to tarry anywhere. Yet, hanumanta was able to keep up with this pace, and do it walking backwards to boot! And remember, he was paying attention to what the Sun was supposedly teaching him! And without stopping for food, water or any other natural requirement!! So it is no exaggeration when shrIpAdarAjaru says categorically that there is nobody equal to hanumanta.

Another interesting point is that this incident is not mentioned in the hari vAyu stuti. And to the best of my knowledge (which is rather limited) it is not mentioned in sumadhva vijaya too.

Verse 7:

<i>akhiLavEdagaLa sArava paThisidanu munnalli nikhiLa vyAkaraNagaLa iva pELida mukhadalli kinchidapashabda ivagillendu mukhyaprANananu rAmananukarisida</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

akhiLavEdagaLa = all the vEdas
sArava = essence
paThisidanu = he recited
munnalli = quickly (or in front of)
nikhiLa = all the
vyAkaraNagaLa = grammar and related topics
iva pELida = he said
mukhadalli = in the face
kinchidapashabda = kinchid + apashada
kinchid = the smallest possible extent
apashabda = wrong pronunciation or usage
ivagillendu = he does not have
mukhyaprANananu = mukhya + prANananu = Chief Life-spirit (vAyu)
ramananukarisida = ramanu + anukarisida = rAma declared.

Quick Translation:

He quickly learnt and recited the essence of all vEdAs and all aspects related to grammar and literature. "There is not a single apashabda (wrong pronunciation or usage) in his speech" thus RAmA praised mukhyaprANa.

Discussion:

akhiLavEdagaLa sArava paThisidanu munnalli

It is also said that Lord hari Himself taught the vEdas to brahma and vAyu at the beginning of creation. So, there was nothing new that hanumanta needed to learn. That is why the word "paTisidanu" (reciting) is used rather than "kalitanu" (learning).

However, the vEdas sing the praises of hari, and the activity of reading and reciting the vEdas is something that gives a great bhakta like hanumanta a lot of pleasure. That is why he always has the meaning of the vEdas in his mind.

nikhiLa vyAkaraNagaLa iva pELida

hanumanta is praised in the scriptures as a great 'vyAkaraNa panDita' (expert in grammar). This is not surprising considering who he is and his capabilities.

It should be remembered that saraswati and bhArati are vidyAbhimAni dEvatas (patron gods for studies). The sumadhva vijaya talks of the gods gathering in the skies to listen to srimadAchArya's discourses.

shrI jayatIrtharu (tIkArAyarU) says that by his grace (along with bhArati dEvi's grace) a dumb mute becomes a great orator ("mUkOpi vAgmi"), and a dull, retarded creature becomes a brilliant scholar (jadamatirapu jantu jAYate prAg.na mouli). Does this point need any more elaboration? I think not!!

mukhadalli kinchidapashabda ivagillendu mukhyaprANananu rAmananukarisida

When sugrIva learnt that rAma and lakshmaNa were in the vicinity, he was not sure of their orientation towards him. He even suspected that they may be friends of vAli. To get a proper idea about them, he sent hanumanta in disguise to interview them and find out the reason for their presence. hanuman disguised himself as a brahmin and spoke with them for a while. rAma observed hanumanta's diction, command over the language and made the following remarks to lakshmaNa

nAnRugvEdavinItasya nAyajurvEda dAriNah
vA sAmavEda viduShah shakyaEvam prabhAShitum
(rAmAyaNa - Canto 2 Verse 28)

"It is not possible for somebody who has not learnt the RgvEda, sAmavEda and yajurvEda with meaning to speak like this."

nUnam vyAkaraNam kRutyamanEnana bahudhAshrutam
bahu vyAharatAnEna na kinchidapashadditam
(rAmAyaNa - Canto 2 Verse 29)

"Nor is it possible for somebody who has not learnt grammar (and other literary aspects) deeply and practised it extensively to speak like this. There is not a single mispronunciation or wrong usage in his speech."

It is said that only an experienced jeweller can gauge the true worth of a precious jewel. The only jewellers who can estimate the worth of this rare and divine jewel are the Lord and His consort.

We can only thank our soubhAgya that "A vAyu namma kula guru rAyanu"

Verse 8:

<p>taraNisutananu kAyda sharadhiyanu neredATi dharaNisuteyaLa kanDu danujaroDane bharadi raNavanemADi gelidu divyAstragaLa uruhi lankeya banda hanumantanu</p>

Word-by-word Meaning:

taraNisutananu = the son of Sun
kAyda = protected
sharadhiyanu = the ocean
neredATi = cross from end to end
dharaNisuteyaLa = the daughter of the Earth (sIta)
kanDu = seen
danujaroDane = with demons
bharadi = fiercely
raNavanemADi = waged a battle
gelidu = won (or rendered useless)
divyAstragaLa = divine weapons
uruhi = burnt
lankeya = lanka
banda = came back (returned)
hanumantanu = hanumanta

Quick Translation:

(Hanumanta) protected the child of the sun god, crossed the ocean from end-to-end, met or saw the daughter of the Earth, fought with rakshAsas and demons ferociously, conquered (or rendered useless) several divyAstras (potent and divine missiles) and returned after burning lanka.

Discussion:

taraNisutananu kAyda:

sugrIva was the incarnation of the sun, so he was also known as taraNisuta (child of sun). Hanumanta helped him in several ways.

First, hanumanta brought about friendship between sugrIva and rAma, and got sugrIva crowned king of the monkeys by rAma.

Next, when sugrIva forgot his promise to rAma, hanumanta cautioned him, "It is not correct to be forget rAma. He is most venerable to us. Even if you forget your promise, I will force you to do what you promised". sugrIva immediately made amends for his lapse. Thus, hanumanta saved sugrIva from the heinous sin of ingratitude (and from rAma's anger, which would have wiped out sugrIva).

rAmA sided with sugrIva and not vAli, only because of hanumanta. (see the posting for Verse 1 for appropriate quotes from MBTN)

sharadhiyanu neredATi

When jAmbuvanta and other monkeys saw the vastness of the ocean, they were convinced that they would never be able to jump across it. They approached hanumanta and praised him

"tvamEka EvAtraparam samarthah kuruShva chaitatparipAhi vAnarAn"
(MBTN canto 6 Verse 58)

"You alone are capable of performing this task and saving the lives of all monkeys (from rAmA's anger at their failure)"

Most of the vAnarAs were actually gods who had incarnated in order to serve the Lord; this incident actually shows the primacy of vAyu amongst all gods.

bharadi raNavanemADi gelidu divyAstragaLa

"ashItikOtiyUthapam purassarAShtkAyutam
anEka hEtisankulam kapIndramAvRuNOdbalam
samAvRutasthAryudhaissa tADitashcha tairbhRusham
chakAr tAn samastashah talaprahAr chUrNitAn"
(MBTN canto 7 Verse 21)

In lanka, hanumanta was attacked by 80 crore (800 million) rAkshAsas (demons), lead by 80 fierce warlords. However, all their attacks and blows had the same effect as hitting an intoxicated elephant with flowers. Yet, hanumanta destroyed all of them with blows from his bare hands.

"sa sarvalOkasAkshiNahsutam sharairvavarShaha
shitairvarAstramantritaih na chainamabhaiva chAlayat"
(MBTN Canto 7, Verse 25)

All the potent and divine missiles that akshakumAra rained on hanumanta had absolutely no effect.

"AthEndrajinmahAsa sharairvarAstrasamprayOjitaih
tataksha vAnarOttamam na chAshakadvichAlanE"
(MBTN Canto 7 Verse 30)

Indrajit swore that he would use very potent missiles and cut off hanumanta's limbs. But none of his missiles could make any impression.

There is a popular misconception that hanumanta was captured by the brahmAstra (one of the most potent weapons available to warriors) used by indrajit. hanumanta could have easily warded off that missile too; after all his level is almost the same as brahma in the hierarchy. However, he allowed himself to be captured because he did not want to deliberately slight brahmAstra, and also because he wanted to meet rAvaNa face-to-face and show him his power. There was also a military purpose to be served since he wanted to get a first-hand estimate of the strength of the enemy).

uruhi lankeya banda hanumantanu

rAvaNA's henchmen tried to enclose hanumanta's tail with clothes or rags; however, just as they would reach the tip, the tail would grow longer, frustrating their efforts. Finally, they gave up and set the tail on fire. However, the fire did not (could not) harm hanumanta, on the contrary it acted as a torch, facilitating the process of setting lanka on fire. srimadAchArya says

krutistu vishwakarmaNOpi avahyatAsyEjasa (MBTN Canto 7 Verse 45)

The handiwork of vishwakarma (Lanka) got burnt by the lustre of hanumanta.

Verse 9:

*harige chUDAmaNiyanittu harigaLa kUDi
sharadhiyanu kaTTi bahu rakkasaranu
orisi raNadali dashashirana huDiguTTi tA
mereda hanumanta balavanta dhIra*

Word-by-word Meaning:

harige = (to) hari
chUDAmaNiyanittu = giving chUDAmaNi (tiara)
harigaLa = monkeys
kUDi = together or with
sharadhiyanu = the ocean
kaTTi = typing up (or limiting)
bahu = lots
rakkasaranu = demons
orisi = killing
raNadali = in the battle
dashashirana = the ten headed one (a name for rAvaNa)
huDiguTTi = repeatedly pounded
tA = he
mereda = exulted
hanumanta = hanumanta
balavanta = strong
dhIra = fearless

Quick Translation:

He gave the chUDAmaNi (tiara) to Hari (Rama), banded the monkeys together, built a bridge across the ocean, (and in the ensuing war) killed several demons and rakshAsas, and repeatedly pounded rAvaNa, this strong and fearless warrior called hanumanta.

Discussion:

harige chUDAmaNiyanittu harigaLa kUDi

rAmam surEshvaramagaNyaguNabhirAmam
samprApya sarvakapivIravarai samEtah
chUDAmaNim pavanajah padayOrnidhAya
sarvAngakaih praNatimasya chakAra bhaktyA
(MBTN Canto 7 Verse 49)

hanumanta the son of pavan (vAyu), along with all the leading monkey warriors, met rAma, the king of all gods, filled with unbounded sadguNAs (good qualities). He submitted the chUDAmaNi (tiara) given by sIta dEvi at His feet and did a sAshtAnga namaskAra (prostration) with complete devotion.

sAshtAnga namaskAra means prostration done as prescribed in the scriptures. They specify that certain parts of the body should be in contact with the ground, the eyes should be viewing (the object of prostration), the mind should be filled with devotion, and the mouth should be chanting the praises (of the object of prostration). This is the correct way of prostrating.

shrI jayatIrtha (tIkArAyaru) has given us a wonderful definition of true devotion. The devotee should have knowledge of the greatness of the object of worship (to the extent he/she is capable). The devotion should be in the form of a flow of affection and friendship that is unwavering and is much, much more than any affection that one may have towards any other object.

sharadhiyanu kaTTi

When rAma was near the ocean, planning the bridge. vibhIshaNa approached him and asked him for protection. This was opposed by all the monkey warriors except hanumanta. However, rAma accepted hanumanta's counsel and rejected that of everybody else. This is a very symbolic yet critical point to note since ultimately if a jIva has to get salvation, vAYu has to recommend him/her as being eligible, and paramAtma goes by his advice.

rAma waited for three days for the ocean god (varuNa) to show up. When this did not happen, he feigned anger and aimed his bow at the ocean, threatening to scorch it completely. varuNa immediately appeared before him, and begged his forgiveness. He granted rAma and his army permission to build a bridge across the ocean.

The question that comes to mind is: why did varuNa not show up for three days, even though he knew rAma was the Lord Himself? srimadAchArya says this was due to "asurAvesha" (demoniac impulse or influence). All the gods below saraswati and bharati are subject to this. The influence is usually for a very short time and once that is past, the affected god gets back his/her normal sAtvic inclinations.

dashashirana huDiguTTi tA mereda hanumanta balavanta dhIra

hanumanta's valor during the war is well documented in the vAYu stuti and sumadhva vijaya. Here I would like to list a few instances when hanumanta taught a lesson to rAvaNa.

The first was when rAvaNa got the better of sugrIva.

athO hanUmAnurgEndra bhOgasamam svabAhum bhRushamunnamayya
tatADa vakShasyadhipam tu, rakshasAm mukhaih sa raktam pravaman papAta
sa labda sang.nah prashashamsa mArutim tvayA samO nAsti pumAn hi kashchit
kah prApayEdanya imAm dashAm mAmitIritO mArutirAha tam punah
atyalapamEtadyadupAtta jIvitah
(MBTN Canto 8 Verse 77, 78, and part of 79)

hanumanta hit rAvaNa on his chest, with his hands which were (are) as strong as the body of sEsha (since sEsha carries viShNu, his body is very strong). hanumanta did not want to kill rAvaNa since that was rAma's privilege, so he did not use full force. However, even this was too much for rAvaNa. He vomitted blood from all his ten faces and fainted. On regaining consciousness he praised hanumanta saying "Without doubt you are matchless, nobody else could have caused me such pain". hanumanta replied "This is just a small blow and that is why you are still alive!"

The second was when lakshmaNa fainted because of rAvaNA's attacks.

prakarShatitvEva nishAcharEshware tathaiva rAmAvarajam tvarAnvitah
samasta jIvAdhipateh parA tanUh samutpapAtAsya purO hanUmAn
sa mushtimAvRutya cha vajrakalpam jaghAna tEnaiva cha rAvaNam ruShA

prasArya bAhUnakhilairmukhairvaman saraktamuShNam vyasuvatpapAta
(MBTN Canto 8, Verse 89, 90)

rAvaNa, the king of rAkshAsas, tried to drag the unconscious body of lakshmaNa to lanka. hanumanta, who was the embodiment of vAyu, who is the leader of all jIvas, hurried to face rAvaNa. He hit him with his vajrAyuda-like fists (indra's thunderbolt missile). RAvaNa could not withstand this; he fell on the ground, vomiting blood from all his faces. hanumanta took lakshmaNa away to safety.

There are several other instances where hanumanta confronted rAvaNa and got the better of him.

Verse 10:

<i>uragabandhake siluki kapivararu mai mareye taraNikulatilakanAgneYane tALi girisahita sanjIvanava kittu tanditta harivarage sariyunTe hanumantage</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

uragabandhake = uraga (snake) + bandhake (imprisonment)
siluki = being bound
kapivararu = leading monkeys
mai mareye = lose consciousness
taraNikulathilakanAgneYane = taraNi (sun) + kula (lineage)
+ tilakana (crown) + AgneYane (command)
tALi = to bear (or in this context, to heed)
girisahita = along with the mountain
sanjIvanava = the sanjIvini herb
kittu = pulled out
tanditta = brought (to where rAma was)
harivarage = the chief monkey
sariyunTe = is there any equal
hanumantage = to hanumanta

Quick Translation:

When the leading monkeys lost consciousness under the influence of the sarpaAstra (Snake missile) initiated by indrajit, hanumanta heeded the command of the crown jewel of the Sun's lineage (Rama), and brought the sanjIvani plant along with its mountain. Is there any equal to hanumanta, the leader of monkeys?

Discussion:

srimadAchArya describes in a beautiful manner what happened when indrajit attacked the vAnara sEna.

"punashcha tasyAstranipIDitAstE nipEtururvyAm kapayah salakshamaNAh
sprushanti nAstrANI durantashaktim tanum samIrasya hi kAni chitkvachit

vig.nAtukAmah puri sampravruttim vibhIshaNah pUrvagatastadAgAt
dadarsha sarvaN patitAnsa vAnarAn marutsutam tvEkamanAkulam cha

satam samAdAyayayou vidhAtRujam vimUrchChitam chOdaka sEkatastam
AshvAsya kim jIvasi hEtyavO uvAcha tathEti sa prahA cha mandavAkyah

UchE punarjIvati kim hanUmAn jIvAma sarvEpi hi jIvamAnE
tasmin hatE nihataShchaiva sarvE itirItEasmItyavadatsa mArutih
(MBTN Canto 8 Verse 148-151)

All the leading monkeys and lakshmaNa fainted because of indrajit's missile. However, nothing happened to hanumanta since no missile could pierce his hard body. VibhIshana, who had gone to lanka, returned and saw the condition of the monkeys. He took hanumanta to jAmbuvanta and found that he too had fainted. After reviving him, vibhIshana asked him "Are you alright?". jAmbuvanta, who did not immediately see hanumanta, asked vibhIshana, "Is hanumanta alive? If he is alive, then we are okay. If he is not alive, then our being alive does not matter at all". Hanumanta then informed him that he was right there.

Later, on jAmbuvanta's instructions, hanumanta flew in search of the sanjIvini herb. He reached the mountain in a very short time. When the herbs was not easily discernible, hanumanta angrily pulled out the whole mountain.

"sa tam samutpATya girim karENa pratOlaitvA baladEvasUnuh
samutpAtAmbaramugravEgo yathA harishchakadharastrIvikramE

avApa chAkShNoh sa nimEShamAtrato nIpAtita yatra kapipravIrah
tachchailavAta sparshAtsumutthitah samastashO vAnarayUthapAh kshaNAt

apUjayanmArutimugrapouruSham raghOttama(mO)syAnujanisthA parE
papAta mUrdhnyasya cha puShpasantatih pramOditairedEvavarairvisarjita"

(MBTN Canto 8 Verse 156-158)

hanumanta the son of vAyu, the patron deity of strength, cradled the whole mountain, which was at least a hundred yojanas (miles?) wide, like a ball on his hand and travelled through the sky at a very high speed. His movement was similar to the way in which hari, the chakradhAri, travelled through the skies as trivikrama.

In the winking of an eyelid, he travelled to where the monkeys lay unconscious. The mere fragrance of the herbs revived the monkeys. Rama praised hanumanta's valor, strength and ability to perform impossible tasks. The gods sprinkled flowers on hanumanta and the monkeys and lakshmaNa sang his praises.

Bringing the mountain was a fantastic feat, but it pales in comparison to the way hanumanta returned it back to its place! He just stood where he was and threw the mountain weighing tonnes of pounds across thousands of miles. And he did it so deftly that there was absolutely no trace of the mountain ever having moved from its place!!

The entire incident has been very beautifully described in the harivAyu stuti too ("prAk panchAshat"). The author, trivikrama panditAchArya finally salutes the dexterity of hanumanta's arms. It is also said that hanumanta brought the mountain on two separate occasions.

The whole incident can be viewed from two angles. One, it shows hanumanta's swAmi-bhakti (loyalty towards his Lord). Two, it shows his love towards his followers and devotees. When the entire army of monkeys lay helpless and distraught, he moved mountains to save their lives and bring happiness back to them. Isn't this the hallmark of a great leader? Aren't you glad that this vAyu is our "kula guru rAyanu"?

One final point. rAma could have easily brought the mountain himself or ordered somebody else to bring it. His choice of vAyu for this task underscores a very important point - His grace comes to us only through vAyu. Very few are qualified to receive His grace directly, almost everybody has to go through vAyu.

Aren't you glad that this vAyu is our "kula guru rAyanu"?

Verse 11:

*vijaya raghupati mechchi dharaNisuteyaLigIye
bhajisi mouktikada hAravanu paDeda
ajapadaviyanu rAma koDuvenene hanumanta
nijabhakutiyane bEDi varava paDeda*

Word-by-word Meaning:

vijaya = victorius
raghupati = leader of raghu clan = rAma
mechchi = appreciating
dharaNisuteyaLigIye = dharaNi + sutelayige + Iye
dharaNisuteyaLige = to sIta
Iye = to give
bhajisi = prayed
mouktikada = (of) pearls
hAravanu = necklace
paDeda = to get
ajapadaviyanu = the post of Creator
rAma
koDuvenene = to say, "I will give"
hanumanta
nijabhakutiyane = nija + bhakti + yanne = only true devotion
bEDi = requested
varava = boon
paDeda = got

Quick Translation:

When the victorious king rAma gave sIta a pearl necklace hanumanta prayed for and obtained it. When offered the post of Creator (Brahma) hanumanta prayed for intense devotion, and got this as a boon from rAma.

Discussion:

The popular story (as portrayed in movies and dramas) is that when rAma gave a pearl necklace to sIta, hanumanta asked her to give it to him. He then proceeded to break the string and examine each pearl. When the surprised sIta asked him what he was up to, he replied that he was looking for rAma and sIta in that string. When questioned further, he tore open his chest and exposed the icon of rAma and sIta that was enshrined there. You may have even seen pictures of this scene.

This is described slightly differently in shrI sumadhva vijaya.

rAjyAbhiShEkEavasitEeatra sItA prEShtAya nastAm bhajatAm dishEti

rAmasyA vANyA maNimanjumAlA vyAjEna dIrghAm karuNAm babamdha
(sumadhwa vijaya Canto 1 Verse 22)

After his coronation was over, rAma asked sIta to give Her beautiful pearl necklace to the one who had served them the most. She used this as an opportunity to give the necklace to hanumanta and shower him with Her benediction.

After the coronation, rAma acknowledged the efforts of everyone who had helped him. (Dont make the mistake of thinking that rAma needed their help and that he was grateful for the same. His gesture was to set an example of how a person who has received help should not forget to express his gratitude, at the moment of his triumph). While acknowledging the efforts of hanumanta, rAma says

"atO hanUmAnpadamEtu dhAturmadAg.nayA sRuShtyavanAdi karma
mOkSham cha lOkasya sadaiva kurvanmuktashcha muktAnsukhayan pravartAm"
(MBTN Canto 8 Verse 240 - 242)

Let hanumanta take brahma's post (of lordship over satya loka). >From there, on my orders, let him perform the tasks of Creation, sustainance and destruction, and granting of mukti too. At his preordained time let him get liberated, and grant the happiness associated with liberation to other eligible souls.

You have to remember that this was not a impulsive gesture made by a grateful rAma, based on services rendered by hanumanta in just one life. This was based on hanumanta's sAdhana (accomplishment) over hundred kalpas, and because of his intrinsic worth.

bhOgAshcha yE yAni cha karma jAtAnyanAdyanantAni mamEha santi
madAg.nyayA tAnyakhilAni santi dhAtuhu padE tatsahabhOganAma
EtAdRusham mE sahabhOjanam tE mayA pradattam hanuman sadaiva
(MBTN Canto 8 Verse 240 - 242)

The enjoyments that I have, the actions that are there in this world, that are without creation and destruction, accrue to me alone. However, based on my orders, they are available to the one holding the post of brahma also. That is why the brahma post is called 'saha bhOga'.

In other words, the essence of all good deeds done by pious souls is accepted by hari, acting through brahma. Since brahma also gets a share of this essence, it is called sahabhOga. When this was offered to hanumanta, he replied as follows:

"pravardhatAm bhaktiralam kShANE kShANE tvayIsha mE hrAsavivrjita sadA
anugrahaste mayI chaivamEva niroupadhou tou mama sarvakAmah"
(MBTN Canto 8 Verse 247)

hanumanta prayed "O Lord rAma, let my devotion to you keep growing from instant to instant, let it be without any defect or imperfection. My devotion and your grace should both be both without any equal or superior".

The same spirit is beautifully captured by purandaradAsaru in his inimitable manner. He says, "hanumanta, you could have asked for so many things - a happy marriage, kingdom, riches etc. For the Lord, none of this would have been difficult. Yet you chose to ask for even more devotion that is forever increasing, completely free from all blemishes and conditionalities".

Such is the selfless, untainted, pure devotion that hanumanta has towards rAma.

Verse 12:

A mArutane bhImanenisi dvAparadi
sOmakuladalli janisi pArtharoDane
bhImavikrama rakkasara muridoTTida
A mahima namma kulagururAyanu

Word-by-word Meaning:

A mArutane = the same mAruti
bhImanenisi = became bhIma
dvAparadi = in dvApara
sOmakuladalli = in the lineage of the moon
janisi = took birth
pArtharoDane = with pArtha (arjuna) and others
bhImavikrama = powerful and ferocious
rakkasara = demons
muridoTTida = decimated
A mahima = the same great entity
namma = our
kulagururAyanu = kula + guru + rAyanu
= chief amongst the gurus of our clan

Quick Translation:

The same mAruti was born in dvApara yuga in the lineage of the moon as bhIma, along with pArtha (arjuna) and others. This valiant and fierce warrior decimated rAkshasAs. This great person is the preceptor of our line

Discussion:

bhIma nenisi

Before starting on the bhImAvatara, it is important to know the meaning of the word 'bhIma'. This is defined as

"bhRutAh mAh yasmin sah bhImah"

The one in whom knowledge of the seven scriptures is full. Here the seven scriptures are the 4 vedas, mUla rAmAyaNa, mahabhArata and pancharAtra. These describe the Lord and sing His praises.

Let us compare this with how the baLitthah sUkta describes the second avatAra (incarnation) of vAyu:

"pRuShO vapuh pitumAnnitya AshayE dvitiyamA saptashivAsu mAtRuShu"

The second avatara (of vAyu) is (or will be) a destroyer of enemies, a partaker of large quantities of food, eternal (or somebody whose death will happen only at his desire) and totally immersed in the seven scriptures.

shrImadAchArya defines 'sEna' as 'inEna sahita' i.e., as somebody who is always with his 'ina' (lord and master).

A mArutane bhImanenisi dvAparadi

It is important to know how kunti got the mantra that lead eventually to the birth of all pAnDavas.

King shUrarAja had a daughter named pRuthu. His friend, King kuntibhOja was issueless. So, shUrarAja let his friend adopt his daughter. From then on, she became known as kunti.

"tatrAgamachChamkarAmshOatikOpO durvAsAstam prAha mAm vAsyEti

tamAha rAja yadikanyakAyAh kShamiShyase shaktitah karmakartrAh
sukham vasEtyOmiti tEna chOkTE shushrUNAyAdishadAshu kuntIm
chakAra karma sA pRuthA munEh sukOpanasya hi
yatha na shakyatE paraih sharIraVA.gmanOanugA

sa vatsaratrayOdasham tayA yathAvadarchitah
upAdishat param manum samasta dEvavashyadam"
(M.B.T.N canto 11 verses 149 - 152)

dUrvAsa, a very short-tempered saint, and an incarnation of rudra, came there (to kuntibhOja's palace). He requested Kuntibhoja "let me stay in your house." Kuntibhoja countered, "You may do so, provided you promise to overlook any minor blemishes committed by the maiden that I will appoint for your service, somebody who will serve you to the best of her ability." dUrvAsa agreed to this condition and kuntibhOja then appointed kunti for the service of the saint.

kunti served the saint for 13 years, in a manner that others could not, with heart and soul. He was pleased by this and then taught her a mantra that could attract any god of her choice.

Later, as desired by bhIshma, she married King pAnDu. Since pAnDu was under a curse, kunti had to use the mantra to invite different gods to bless her with children.

sOmakuladali janisi

The pandavas were part of the lineage that originated from the moon. This lineage was blessed to have many pious kings like kuru, virUtha, manyu, hasti etc.

janisi pArtharoDane

It is well known that the 5 pAnDavas were the incarnations of different gods - yama (yudhishtira), vAyu (bhIma), indra (arjuna), ashwini devatas (nakula and sahadEva). However, not many know that vAyu was present in all the 5 pAnDavas, albeit in different forms.

"yudhiShtarAdyEShu chaturShu vAyusmAviShtah phalgunEeatO
vishEShAt | yudhiShtirE soumyarupENa viShtah vireNA rupENa
dhananjayEasou | shRungArarUpam kEvalam darshayAnO vivESha
vAyuhu yamoujapradhAnah | shRungAra kaivalyamababhIpsmAnah
pAnDurhiputram chakame chaturtham | shRungArarUpO nakule
vishEShat sunItirUpah sahadEvam vivESha | guNaisyamastai
svayamEva vAyuhu babhUva bhUmou jagadantarAtma | supalla
vAkAratanurhi kOmalah prAyO janaih prOchyatE rUpashAli |
tatassujAtou varavajrakAyou bhImarjunAvapyute pAnDuraichChat |
aprAkRutANAm tu manOharam yadrUpam dvAtrimshallaShaNOpEt

magryam | tanmArutO nakulO kOmalAbha Evam vayuhu panacha
rUpoatra chAsIt|"

(M.B.T.N Canto 12/129 -133)

vAyu was (also) present in (the other) 4 pAndavas (yudhishtira, arjuna, nakula and sahadEva). His peaceful form was present in yudhishtira, whereas it was the herioc form in arjuna. Since pAnDu wanted a beautiful son, vAyu showed his beautiful side in nakula and sahadEva. His sunIti form (representing justice and wisdom) entered sahadEva. He manifested himself in his true form, the one which pervades and controls the whole world, complete with all good qualities, as bhIma. It is the way of the world that only somebody who has a tender and supple body is considered handsome. Thus even though arjuna and bhIma were extremely good looking, they were not considered handsome because of their good physique and tough bodies. That is why, pAnDu wanted a handsome son after bhIma and arjuna, and that is what he got with nakula. bhIma's form was perfect and had all the 32 signs prescribed for a perfect physique (something that only Celestials could discern).

shrI vAdirAja tIrtha has described this very poetically as follows, "The ferociousness shown by shrI hari while killing hiraNyakashipu is absent when he is with lakshmi. Similarly the steel body shown by bhIma while killing jarAsandha is absent when he is with droupadi. The same contrast in forms can be seen between bhIma and nakula".

Verse 13:

*karadinda shishubhAvanAda bhImana biDalu
giriyoDedu shatashrungavendenesitu
harigaLa harigaLim karigaLa karigaLim
areda vIranige sura nararu sariye*

Word-by-word Meaning:

karadinda = from the hand
shishubhAvanAda = having the looks of an infant
bhImana = bhIma
biDalu = dropped
giriyoDedu = the mountain broke
shatashrungavendenesitu = shata + shrunga + vendu + enisitu
= became hundreds of pieces
harigaLa harigaLim = horses against horses
karigaLa karigaLim = elephants against elephants
areda = grind
vIranige = warrior
sura = gods
nararu = humans
sariye = is there any equal

Quick Translation:

When the infant-like bhIma was dropped from his mother's lap, the mountain (on which his mother was present) broke into a hundred pieces. He pounded horses against horses and elephants against elephants, is there a human or god equal to this great warrior?

Discussion:

It should be noted that the incident highlighted in this verse is not covered (in depth) in the harivAyustuti.

shishubhAvanAda

The word "shishubhAvanAda" means having the look of an infant. This term, rather than the more straightforward "shishu", has been used for a reason.

Even though vAyu was "born" to kunti, his birth was of a totally different nature. Normally a child goes through tribulations in its mother's womb (the shAstras compare this to stay in a dark prison). This was not the case with bhIma. Nor was he conceived out of a sexual interaction. His physique had all the 32 marks associated with a perfect physique. Also, a human body goes through different states like childhood, adolescence, manhood, old-age etc, where the capabilities of the body in terms of strength, stamina etc. vary. This was not the case with bhIma. Only the appearance changed with time, there was no waxing or waning of strength and capabilities.

Incidentally, all of the above holds true in the case of the Lord too. Even though He appears to take birth, grow, sleep, bleed, die etc, none of this actually happens since His body is not made up of any "prakritic" (natural or material) elements; it consists of pure and unsullied bliss and knowledge. Attributing such human-like characteristics to the Lord is one of the forms of hatred towards him, and is a sure-fire way of landing in tamas (dark and eternal hell, replete with unimaginable suffering).

giriyoDedu shatashrungavendenesitu

This is described as follows in the mahAbhArata tAtparyanirNaya.

"tajjanmamAtrENa dhAra vidAritA shArdULabhItAjjananIkarAdyadA
papAta sanchUrNita Eva parvatastEnAkhiloOasou shatashRunganAmA"
(M.B.T.N Canto 12 Verse 55)

Even at the time of his birth, the earth split. His mother dropped him out of fear when she heard a tiger roar. Due to this, the structure of the mountain named shatashRunga became very weak.

This clearly indicates that the name of the mountain was shatashRunga (hundred peaks) and not that it broke into a hundred fragments after bhIma fell on it. That is why srimadAchArya says that the mountain became fragile and shaky after bhIma fell on it.

This is described much more poetically in Sumadhwa Vijaya.

"indrAyudham hIndrakarAbhinunnam
chichChEda pakshAn kshitidhAriNAm prAk
bibhEda bhUbhRudvapurangasangAchchitram
sa pannOjananIkarAgrAt"
(SMV Canto 1, Verse 29)

"In the past, indra's hands threw the indrAyudha (vajrAyudha) at the hills and cut off their wings. However, when bhIma slipped from his mothers hands and fell, the mountain broke under the impact of his body. This is astonishing."

The idea expressed is that when indra threw his powerful missile, using all his strength, he could only cut off the wings of the mountains; whereas, bhIma was able to break it into pieces just by the sheer impact of his infant body. The power of vAyu is truly astonishing and unimaginable.

harigaLa harigaLim karigaLa karigaLim areda vIranige

During the kurukshEtra war with kauravas, bhIma was the personification of destruction. He single-handedly destroyed more than half the kaurava army. Such was his strength that he could kill elephants with bare fists. Once he killed a massive and ferocious elephant that was causing havoc, swung it around and threw it on the enemy army killing thousands of soldiers, horses and elephants. A more graphic and detailed description of his heroic deeds is given in the later verses.

Verse 14:

<i>kurupa garaLavanikke nereyunDu tEgi uragagaLa mElbiDalu adanorasida aragina maneyalli uriyanikkalu dhIra dharisi jAhnavigoyda tannanujara</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

kurupa = kuru + p = king of kurus (duryOdhana)
garaLavanikke = gave poisoned food
nereyunDu = completely ate
tEgi = burped (digested)
uragagaLa = snakes
mElbiDalu = set upon
adanorasida = killed them
aragina = wax
maneyalli = palace
uriyanikkalu = put fire
dhIra = brave warrior
dharisi = carried
jAhnavigoyda = to ganga river
tannanujara = his brothers

Quick Translation:

When the King of Kurus (duryOdhana) administered poison to bhIma, he ate and digested it heartily. When snakes were set upon him, he finished them off easily. When the palace of wax (in which he, his mother and brothers were sleeping) was set on fire, he easily carried his entire family on his shoulders and brought them to the banks of the ganga.

Discussion:

kurupa garaLavanikke nereyunDu tEgi

After being cursed by a sage, King pAnDu handed over the reins of the kingdom to his brother dhRutarAShTra and went to the forest with his wives kunti and mAdri. Since dhRutarAShTra was blind, his eldest son duryOdhana was the king for all practical purposes. That is why the term "kurup" has been used.

(The description that follows is based on MBTN Canto 14 - Verses 62-78, rearranged slightly)

asuras (demons) and other evil people are destined for tamas (dark and eternal hell). Their progress towards this is determined solely by the hatred that they exhibit towards hari and vAyu (and other sAtvik souls). All of duryOdhana's siblings and associates were asuras, whereas hari and vAyu took birth as krishNa and bhIma respectively.

duryOdhana and his cohorts developed a hatred for bhIma even during their childhood, mainly out of jealousy towards his overpowering personality and superior strength. bhIma played a lot of pranks on them to ensure that the hatred blossomed. Some of his pranks were as follows:

When the children would climb a fruit-laden tree to pluck the fruits, bhIma would shake the entire tree and make the fruit drop (along with the children). He would grab a bunch of them and hold them under water, letting them go at the last minute. He dominated every kind of sport - running, wrestling, pulling, jumping etc. These acts brought about opposite results in his mates - children who were essentially divine in nature developed love and respect towards him, whereas all the asuras developed an overpowering hatred.

duryOdhana was determined to kill bhIma and arjuna and then grab the kingdom from the helpless yudhiShTira. Since bhIma was too strong to be killed in a straight-fight, duryOdhana decided to do so through deceit. To this end, he tried his level best in every possible manner. However, as a staunch and steadfast devotee of hari, subject to His full grace, bhIma had no difficulty in emerging successful every single time.

First, he was given poisoned food. This poison was a by-product of the churning of the ocean and had been given to rudra by hari. ShukrAchArya had obtained it from rudra through penance, and in turn, shakuni has obtained it from him. This powerful poison was mixed with food and given to bhIma. He ate it, digested it and shrugged it off. Next, they tied him in steel ropes and threw him in the ganges. bhIma had no difficulty in breaking the ropes and rising to the surface.

uragagaLa mElbiDalU adanorasida

Next, duryOdhana and his evil cohorts obtained 8 vicious and poisonous snakes and handed them over to their charioteer, who released them on the sleeping bhIma's chest. The snakes were so powerful that their mere sight or breath was potent enough to burn down cities. However, when the snakes tried to bite bhIma's hard body they broke their fangs! He then killed them and flung them afar, and killed their progeny, along with the evil charioteer. This caused a lot of sadness to the asuras.

aragina maneyalli uriyanikkalu dhIra dharisi jAhnavigoyda tannanujara

(The description that follows is based on MBTN Canto 19 - Verses 37-41, rearranged slightly).

duryOdhana and his evil cohorts next arranged for a palace of wax to be built and requested kunti and her sons to stay there for a while. vidura, who guessed the reason for this wax palace, arranged for a masoner to build a secret tunnel, leading from the palace to a safe place.

duryOdhana sent his minister purOchana with the overt purpose of attending to the needs of kunti, but with the covert goal of burning down the wax palace at a suitable time. bhIma, who knew the whole plan, was biding his time.

purOchana had an evil sister who had performed rigorous penance for one year with the objective of making her 5 sons gods. rudra had granted her that boon with the rider that this would happen if she was not killed along with her sons.

The sister visited purOchana along with her 5 sons. She cooked a meal for the pAnDavAs but laced it with a deadly poison. BhIma ate all the food thus preventing the others from eating it; he digested it without any side-effect. In the night when everybody was sleeping, he woke up his mother and brothers, and carried them away to safety, setting the palace on fire. purOchana, his sister and her sons were all killed together, thus negating the boon that she had obtained. bhIma carried his entire family on his shoulders and reached the banks of the ganga.

Verse 15:

<i>allidda baka hiDimbakaremba rakkasara nilladorisida lOkakanTakaranu ballidasurara gelidu droupadi karaviDidu yella sujanarige haruShava bIrida</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

allidda = (those) who were there
baka = name of a demon
hiDimbakaremba = name of another demon
rakkasara = demons
nilladorisida = eradicated
lOkakanTakaranu = public enemies
ballidasurara = knowledgeable gods
gelidu = won
droupadi = droupadi
karaviDidu = (took her) hand in marriage
yella = all
sujanarige = good people
haruShava = happiness
bIrida = distributed

Quick Translation:

He eradicated demons baka and hidimbika who were there and tormenting everybody. He vanquished knowledgeable gods, took droupadi's hand in marriage and brought forth a lot of happiness to good people.

Discussion:

(The description that follows is based on MBTN Canto 19 - Verses 48 - 56, 87 - 95 rearranged slightly)

allidda baka hiDimbakaremba rakkasara nilladorisida lOkakanTakaranu

bhIma reached the banks of ganga along with his mother and brothers. This place was inhabited by a demon named hiDimba and his sister hiDimbi.

hiDimba had performed penance of rudra and obtained a boon of invincibility. hiDimbi was actually an apsara (heavenly damsel) named shRi who had been cursed by indrA's wife to take the life of a demoness. shRi had prayed to bhArati dEvi (vAyu's wife) for mitigation. Pleased with her penance, bhArati had granted her a boon that her curse would be lifted after she married bhIma. In order to make this happen, an element of bhArati incarnated along with hiDimbi.

hiDimbi was sent by her brother to obtain some food. She saw the exceptionally handsome bhIma and lost her heart to him. She took on the form of a beautiful woman and asked him to marry her. He refused saying that his elder brother was as yet unwed. hiDimbi then told him that vEdavyAsa himself would come there in the immediate future and make him agree. Annoyed by his sister's absence, hiDimba came there and saw her with bhIma. This angered him and he attacked bhIma with huge boulders and trees. bhIma brushed aside all his missiles and easily killed him with his bare hands, breaking the boon granted by rudra (this is possible since vAyu is much higher than rudra in the hierarchy of gods).

hiDimbi requested kunti and yudhiShTira to intercede on her behalf, which they did, but bhIma did not yield. Finally, vEdavyAsa himself came and asked bhIma to marry hiDimbi. BhIma immediately agreed (this is a good example of the verse that was stated earlier - 'hariyanallade bageyanannyaranu lOkadoLu' - he does not yield to anybody other than hari). After a year or so, they had a son named ghatOtkacha. bhIma then allowed hiDimba to go back to her heavenly abode with her son, after extracting a promise that they would both return whenever he needed them.

vEdavyAsa took kunti and her sons with Him to Ekachakra and introduced them as His disciples. He arranged for them to stay in a brahmin's house as guests. Ekachakra was tormented by a demon called baka, who had become invincible because of a boon granted by rudra. Unable to tolerate his random killings, the people of that city had arrived at an understanding with him that everyday he would be fed enormous amounts of food along with one human being. When the turn of the pAnDavas' host came, bhIma took his place and killed baka.

ballidasurara gelidu droupadi karaviDidu

pArvati, yama's wife shyAmala, indra's wife shachi, and usha, the wife of ashwini dEvatas were cursed by brahma to take human lives. Instead of taking 5 bodies, they approached bhArati dEvi and requested her to make it possible for them to share her body when she incarnated in dvAparayuga. bhArati agreed and that is how droupadi was born with one body and the spirit of 5 goddesses.

droupadi's father drupada organized her svayamvara and invited princes from afar. The contestants had to lift shivA's bow (which was given to drupada as a gift), and shoot at the eye of a wooden fish, only with the aid of its reflection. All the major princes of the land came and failed. Even though krishNa, balarAma and other yAdavas were there, they had been ordered by krishna not to make an attempt. The panDavas came in the guise of brahmins and after obtaining krishNa's blessings, arjuna succeeded in his attempt. When other contestants objected to brahmins participating in the contest and tried to prevent the marriage, bhIma held them at bay.

arjuna went home with his bride and announced that he had won a prize. kunti, who has inside the kitchen, ordered all of them to share it equally. This put the panDavas in a dilemma since they did not want to disobey their mother, but it was unheard of for 5 people to marry one person. Fortunately, krishNa arrived

there and set their minds at rest. Based on His advice they all decided to marry her.

Next day, after returning to drupada's palace, they revealed their identity to the delighted drupada. However, when he heard of their plan to marry droupadi he objected. vEdavyAsa came there and advised drupada to concur, after explaining her unique background. When drupada still persisted in his objections, vEdavyAsa gave him divine powers and showed him the presence of the gods and goddesses present in the pAnDavas and droupadi. drupada realized his mistake and felt sorry for questioning vEdavyAsa's direct order. However, vEdavyAsa forgave him and the marriage of droupadi with each of the pAnDavas was performed with great pomp and glory.

Verse 16:

<i>rAjakula vajranenisida mAgadhana sILi rAjasUyayAgavanu mADisidanu AjiyoLu kouravara balava savaruvenendu mUjagavariye kankaNakaTTida</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

rAjakula = the clan of kings
vajranenisida = known as the vajrAyudha (indra's feared missile)
mAgadhana = king of magadha (jarAsandha)
sILi = split
rAjasUyayAgavanu = the rAjasUya yAga
mADisidanu = he got it performed
AjiyoLu = in the world
kouravara = kourava's
balava = strength
savarunenendu = eradicate
mUjagavariye = in a manner that the three worlds could know
kankaNakaTTida = made an oath

Quick Translation:

jarAsandha, the king of magadha, was known as the thunderbolt of kings (i.e., he was so strong that nobody could hope to fight against him and survive), but bhIma tore his body into 2 halves. He took an oath heard in all the three worlds that he would decimate the strength of the kauravas.

Discussion:

rAjakula vajranenisida mAgadhana sILi

King pAnDu had been cursed by indra to remain in yamaloka (kingdom of yama, the God of death) after his death, until his sons performed rAjasUya yAga.

sage nArada informed yudhiShTira that his father pAnDu was still in yamaloka and would remain there until his sons performed rAjasUya yAga. yudhiShTira felt sorry for his father and immediately sent for krishNa, to seek His advice in this matter.

jarAsandha had been brought up a demoness named jara. He had performed severe penance regarding rudra and brahma, and obtained boons of invincibility from

them. He was so powerful that even balarAma could not kill him. He had an overpowering hatred towards krishNa, since he was an asura by nature. This hatred had blossomed with the killing of kamsa, who was his son-in-law. He had attacked mathura several times in vain. krishNa had shifted his capital to dwAraka, a city ensconced in the ocean, out of pity for his people who had suffered a lot under jarAsandha's constant attacks.

jarAsandha had imprisoned the relatives of krishna's wives and intended to offer them as human sacrifices for the shiva yagna that he was planning to perform. Their kith and kin sent an entreaty to krishNa, imploring him to free them. This arrived at the same time as yudhiShTira's emissary.

krishNa visited the pAndavas and told them about indra's curse. He advised them to perform the yAga, but cautioned them against jarAsandha. On hearing this, yudhiShTira got scared and gave up the idea of the yAga, but bhIma stood up and took an oath to kill jarAsandha with krishNa's blessings. krishNa had several reasons why He wanted the yAga performed - getting a good status to pAnDu, killing of jarAsandha, freeing of his relatives etc, but the most important was to ensure that the fruits of the yAga went to bhIma. It was finally decided that krishNa, bhIma and arjuna would visit magadha without arms, in the guise of brahmins. krishNa promised yudhiShTira to protect bhIma and arjuna from all harm.

The three of them arrived at magadha and immediately announced their arrival through a series of attacks. They levelled a huge shivalinga-like hill that jarAsandha worshipped every day, they destroyed 3 massive drums that adorned the city and entered jarAsandha's palace the way a lion enters the jungle, fiercely announcing its arrival. When questioned by jarAsandha they revealed their identity and asked him to select one of them for individual combat. He declined to fight with arjuna since he was no match physically, he declined krishNa since he was a cowherd (but the actual reason was that jarAsandha was scared that krishNa would easily kill him). He chose bhIma since he seemed to be the most appropriate from all angles.

The fight started with verbal sparring. jarAsandha took the stand that shiva was supreme and tried to prove his point. However, bhIma easily defeated him and proved that hari was supreme. Next, they fought with maces and later with bare hands. The fight was extremely gruesome and drew even the gods as spectators. bhima played with jarAsandha for 15 days, out of respect for the boons granted by brahma and rudra. Finally, when the time was ripe, he took the blessings of krishNa, and killed jarAsandha by splitting his body into 2 halves. He treated jarAsandha as a yagya-pashu (sacrifice) and submitted this to krishNa, who is the acceptor of all yagyas. krishNa embraced bhIma and showed His happiness at the amazing feat performed by his favorite devotee. Thus bhIma rid the world of an evil tormentor.

Later the three of them returned to hastinApura and were greeted by everybody. In due course of time, under vEdavyAsa's directions, the rAjasUya yAga was performed.

In the shrI harivAyu stuti, shri trivikrama panDitAchArya states very poetically ("nirmRudnannatyayatnamrAjasUyashvamEdhE") that bhIma's act of killing of jarAsandha like a yagna-pashu and offering this to krishna (who was witnessing this in person) gave krishna more pleasure than the rAjaSuya and ashvamEdha yAgas performed by yudhiShTira.

AjiyoLu kouravara balava savaruvenendu mUjagavariye kankaNakaTTida

This refers to the oath that bhIma took at the time of droupadi-vastrApaharaNa. Since all the events leading upto, and following the gambling incident have been depicted in hundreds of plays, movies, songs and TV serials I will not repeat them, except to repeat the oaths that bhIma took. He swore that he would break duryOdhana's thighs and kill him, kill dushyAsana, single-handedly kill all of dhRutharAShTra's 100 sons. droupadi swore that she would leave her hair untied until bhIma drenched them with dushyAsana's blood. All of these oaths were made true in the kurukshEtra war.

Verse 17:

<p><i>dAnavara savarabEkendu byAga mAnanidhi droupadiya manadingitavanaritu kAnanava pokku kimmIrAdigaLa muridu mAninige sougandhikavane tanda</i></p>

Word-by-word Meaning:

dAnavara = demons
savarabEkendu = eradicate or decimate
byAga = quickly
mAnanidi = esteemed
droupadiya = droupadi's
manadingitavanaritu = understanding (her) mind's desire
kAnanava = jungle
pokku = entered
kimmArAdigaLa = demon kimmAra and others
muridu = after breaking
mAninige = for his wife
sougandhikavane = the sougandhika flower
tanda = he brought

Quick Translation:

In order to to eradicate evil people quickly, and to satisfy droupadi's desire (for the sougandhika flower), he entered the forest, killed demons kimmara and others, and brought back sougandhika for his wife.

Discussion:

kAnanava pokku kimmIrAdigaLa muridu

From dhRutharAShTra's place the pAnDavas went to the forest directly. Here they were confronted by kirmmIra, another ferocious demon who was harassing people. He was baka's brother and was waiting to avenge his brother's death at bhIma's hands. A violent fight occurred between him and bhIma, and he died a painful death.

dAnavara savarabEkendu byAga mAnanidhi droupadiya manadingitavanaritu

During their vanavAsa (stay in the forest), pAnDavas happened to visit badari. Once, when bhIma and droupadi were alone near the mountain, a rare and beautiful flower with a heavenly fragrance dropped in their midst. droupadi loved the flower and asked bhIma to bring her a few more like them. She knew very well

that this flower was the sougandhika, available on kubera's garden on the gandhamAdana mountain, guarded by evil, fierce and arrogant demons. Since killing of such demons was one of the primary objectives of bhIma's incarnation, she expressed this desire and sent him on this task.

As bhIma was climbing the mountain several evil demons attacked him in the form of lions and tigers. He killed all of them and proceeded further, meeting hanumanta on the way. The interaction between bhIma and hanumanta was an interesting one. Even though both were forms of vAyu, and equal in strength and capabilities, bhIma acted as if hanumanta was a stranger. He pretended to be unable to lift hanumanta's tail, and requested hanumanta to tell him about rAma's valor and greatness. All of this was pretense mainly for the beguiling of asuras, and also in keeping with accepted norms of behavior. This is explained very clearly in the harivAyu stuti too ("gachchan sougandhikArtham").

When bhIma reached the garden he was challenged by another set of demons. Initially they sparred with him verbally. They took the position that shiva is supreme, the world is an illusion and that all the jIvas are essentially the same as parabrahma. bhIma refuted all their arguments and defeated them in debate. Enraged, they attacked him with weapons and missiles and met their end at his hands.

bhIma went back to droupadi with the flowers. YudhiShTira was anxious about bhIma's health; he was also worried about angering kubera, and in turn rudra. However, kubera who knew the identity of bhIma was not angered by bhIma's action.

Yet another time droupadi requested bhIma to bring some more sougandhika flowers. Again, her objective was eradication of evil forces and enhancement of bhIma's name and fame.

A similar set of events happened this time too, except that the demons were lead by a fierce leader called manimanta. He had performed severe penance and obtained boons of invincibility from rudra. He could not defeat bhIma in debate or battle and met his end at his hands. However, he swore undying enmity towards bhIma and promised to come back in kaliyuga and cause him pain by misinterpreting scriptures. [According to the sumdhva vijaya, he was reborn as sankara and spread his own interpretation of the scriptures. He even came as a snake and bit madhvAchArya when he was a boy, but could not do any harm]

This time, due to influence of evil spirits, kubera was angered by bhIma's action and wanted to go to war against him. Fortunately for him, saner counsels prevailed, and he apologized to bhIma and invited the pAnDavas to stay with him.

Verse 18:

<p><i>duruLa kIchakanu droupadiya cheluvikege maruLAGi karakariya mADalavanA garaDimaneyolu barasi orisi avananvayava kurupanaTTida mallakulava savarida</i></p>

Word-by-word Meaning:

duruLa = evil

kIchakanu = kIchaka (the name of an evil rAkshAsa)

droupadiya = droupadi's

chelvikege = beauty
maruLAgI = become enamoured
karakariya = harassment
mADalavanA = doing
garaDimaneyolu = dance hall
barasi = made him come
orisi = wipe out
avananvayava = his existence
kurupanaTTida = the king of kurus (duryOdhana)
mallakulava = army of wrestlers
savarida = killed

Quick Translation:

When the evil kIchaka, enamoured by droupadi's beauty, started harassing her, bhIma lured him to the dancing hall and killed him. He then proceeded to defeat the army of wrestlers sent by the King of Kurus (duryOdhana).

Discussion:

duruLa kIchakanu droupadiya orisi avananvayava

At the end of their twelve years stay in the forest, the pAnDavas were supposed to stay incognito for one year. The terms were such that if they were detected during this year they would have to spend another 12 years in the forest. The pAnDavas chose matsya kingdom for their secret stay. This was ruled by virAtrAja, a weak and ineffective king. The real power behind the throne was his brother-in-law kIchaka, his wife sudhEshNa's brother.

yudhiShTira became the king's advisor, bhIma a cook, arjuna a eunuch teaching dancing to the princess, nakula and sahadewa cowherds, and draupadi a maid serving the queen.

kIchaka was a very powerful and evil warrior. His prowess as a wrestler was legendary. Once, when he was with his sister after returning from a successful tour of conquest, his lustful eyes fell on droupadi. Ignoring his sister's pleas he made some unwelcome advances at droupadi. Unable to tolerate this, droupadi asked bhIma for help. bhIma asked her to invite him to the dancing hall that night. kIchaka gladly agreed. That night, bhIma took on the form of a beautiful damsel and completely bowled over kIchaka. Finally, he pummelled kIchaka to death with his bare fists. Once again, he had rid the earth of a powerful and evil bully who had made a lot of people miserable.

kurupanaTTida mallakulava savarida

kIchaka's brothers attacked droupadi to avenge kIchaka's death, but bhIma killed all of them and protected her.

When duryOdhana heard of the death of kIchaka, he suspected the hand of bhIma since there was nobody else who could do it. He immediately sent a group of wrestlers to matsya, who challenged the king to find wrestlers who could fight with them. Since it was a question of the kingdom's pride, yudhiShTira asked bhIma to fight with them, which he did. duryOdhana's wrestlers were soundly defeated.

After this, duryOdhana attacked matsya in order to expose the pAnDavas. arjuna became Prince uttara's charioteer and defeated the kourava army. At the end of

the war, duryOdhana identified the pAnDavas, but they argued that since 13 years had passed since their banishment there should be no penalty. However, duryOdhana contested this saying that according to the solar calendar there were still 5 months left. Finally, bhIshma and vidura ruled in favor of the pAnDavas saying that according to the lunar calendar, which was prevalent then, 13 years had indeed passed, thus negating duryOdhana's claim.

The grateful virAtrAja offered his daughter utara's hand in marriage to arjuna, but he accepted her as his daughter-in-law, i.e., as his son abhimanyu's bride.

Having completed the terms of their banishment, the pAnDavas returned to claim their portion of the kingdom.

Verse 19:

*kouravara bala savari vairigaLa neggotti
Orante kouravana muridu mereda
vairi dushyAsanana raNadali eDegeDehi (toDeya laDDageDahi)
vIranarahariya lIleya tOrida*

Word-by-word Meaning:

kouravara = the kauravas
bala = strength
savari = decimate
vairigaLa = enemies
neggotti = broke their bones
Orante = as described above
kouravana = duryOdhana
muridu = broke (his thighs)
mereda = exulted
vairi = enemy
dushyAsanana = dushyAsana
raNadali = in the battle
eDegeDehi = kicked him to the ground
vIra = brave warrior
narahariya = narasimha
lIleya = sport or glory
tOrida = showed

Quick Translation:

He reduced the strength of the kouravAs, decimated enemies and broke duryOdhana (i.e., his thighs). He humbled and then eradicated dushyAsana in the battle. He thus demonstrated the glory (or greatness) of narahari (Krishna).

Discussion:

kouravara bala savari vairigaLa neggotti

During droupadi's vastrApaharaNa bhIma had taken several oaths - to kill dushyAsana, duryOdhana and the rest of dhrutarAshtra's sons. During the kurukshEtra war, he single-handedly killed all of the kauravas. He destroyed close to 6 out of the 11 akOshiNis (I don't know the modern equivalent - battalion or division?) that the kauravas had assembled.

On the battlefield, he resembled the God of Death himself, displaying unmatched ferociousness and courage, striking terror in the hearts of the enemy. He chased major commanders of the enemy army and attacked them with an intensity that was unheard of. Most of them lost their lives, while some lucky ones escaped with just a few broken bones. Overall, he thoroughly demoralized the enemy and reduced it to a bunch of cowards in his presence.

vairi dushyAsanana raNadali eDegeDehi

While the war was going on, bhIma was constantly searching for dushyAsana in order to make him pay him for his vile deeds. But dushyAsana the coward was constantly eluding him. Finally, when bhIma met him face-to-face, his joy knew no bounds. He jumped on him like a lion jumps on a deer, destroyed his chariot and threw him down on the ground. He then split dushyAsana's chest with his mace, sat on his stomach and made a big hole in his chest, creating a pool of blood. He then pretended to drink dushyAsana's blood and reminded him of every one of his misdeeds. He challenged the rest of the kaurava army to rescue dushyAsana if they could, but the terrible sight curdled the blood of even hardened warriors and no one dared to come near him. The vile and foul dushyAsana thus got his just desserts, in the manner bhIma had promised.

vIranarahariya lIleya tOrida

A point to note is that bhIma did not actually drink the blood since the scriptures expressly forbid partaking of human blood. He ensured that the blood did not cross his clenched teeth, thus protecting his dharma. The whole thing was a big act, mainly to strike terror in the kaurava army and demoralize it thoroughly. And also to show the world what a terrible fate awaited people who insulted and humiliated hari bhaktas. Indeed this was the reason why hari incarnated as narasimha and showed the world his fearsome form. In fact, the words "narahariya lIleya" have been used only to drive home the similarity between bhIma's act and that of narasimha. And also to remind us that both the acts, through gruesome to behold, were steeped in dharma, without even a trace of adharma.

Another point to note is that as bhIma was killing dushyAsana, he "saw" or glimpsed manyu sUkta. That is why he is considered one of the "drashTAs" or "rishis" of manyu sUkta.

Orante kouravana muridu mereda

Towards the end of the war, when duryOdhana sensed defeat, he ran away and hid in a lake. He was reciting the mantra that had been taught to him by dUrvasa. These mantras were so potent that if duryOdhana were to recite them for a week, staying under water his dead army would have regained life, and become invincible. krishNa knew this, so he brought the pAnDavas to the lake and instructed yudhiShTira to insult duryOdhana by calling him a coward. When this was done, the arrogant duryOdhana came to the surface and challenged the pAnDavas. He was given the option of choosing one of the pAnDavas with a weapon of his choice; the understanding was that he succeeded in defeating his opponent, victory was his.

duryOdhana chose the mace as his weapon and bhIma as his opponent since the others were no match for him. Finally, bhima broke his thighs and incapacitated him. When members of the kaurava army remonstrated saying that hitting an opponent on his thighs was against the rules of mace fighting, krishNa defended bhIma's action saying that he had kept his oath of breaking duryOdhana's thighs.

Also, bhIma had struck him on the waist and not below, thus avoiding violating the rules of combat. Thus bhIma killed the last of the kauravas and kept all of his oaths. He submitted his entire action as an offering at the feet of krishNa.

In fact, throughout his life, every single asura or demo killed by bhIma was offered as a 'bali-pashu' to krishNa, the acceptor of all yagna offerings. The sole objective behind his acts was 'hari-prIti' and not to serve as a display of his individual strength or greatness.

Verse 20:

<i>gurusutanu sangaradi nArAyaNAstravanu uravaNisi biDalu shastrava bisuTaru harikRupeya paDedirda bhIma hunkAradali hariya divyAstravanu nere aTTida</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

gurusutanu = teacher's son (drONa's son ashvatthAma)
sangaradi = in the battle
nArAyaNAstravanu = the fiery missile called nArAyaNAstra
uravaNisi = at a very high speed
biDalu = hurl
shastrava = missile
bisutaru = threw or hurled
harikRupeya = hari's grace
paDedirda = having achieved
bhIma
hunkAradali = with a snort
hariya = hari's
divyAstravanu = divine missile
nere = aside
aTTida = chased away

Quick Translation:

In the kurukshEtra battle, ashwatthAma, the son of drONa, issued the nArAyaNAstra (a powerful and dreaded missile) on bhIma in order to reduce him to ashes. On krishNa's orders, everybody else threw down their weapons (to save themselves). However, bhIma, who had the complete blessings of hari (nArAyaNa) Himself, easily averted the missile with a snort.

Discussion:

drONa, the teacher of the kauravas and pAnDavas had a son called ashvatthAma. He is considered to be an amsha of rudra. As soon as he was born he neighed like a horse, and an astral voice asked drONa to name his son as ashvatthAma. He was brought up on horsegram juice, something that even adults cannot digest easily. He was a very great warrior, skilled in the use of all weapons. He is considered to be one of the immortals (chiranjIvis) and is believed to be alive even today.

During the kurukshEtra war, when Dronacharya had been led to believe that his son Ashwatthama was dead, he lost interest in the battle and even in life, and was killed by Dhrishtadyumna as he sat to meditate on the battlefield. When Ashwatthama came to know of Drona's killing, he took the extreme step of using

the nArAyaNAstra (a powerful and dreaded missile) to annihilate the Pandavas in one shot.

krishNa knew that no other missile or weapon could match this missile and the only defence against this missile was total surrender. Accordingly, He ordered the entire pAnDava army to throw down their weapons and bow their heads in total submission. Everybody including arjuna did this; the only exception was bhIma. He refused saying that as a warrior he could not bend his head to save his life, as that would be an act of cowardice. So, he continued to bear arms and confront the weapon as that was pure kshatriya-dharma:

```
shuddhaxatriyadharmeshhu niratatvAd.h vR^ikodaraH |  
vAhanAdavartIryAnyaiH praNate.api nirAyudhaiH |  
sAyudhaH saratho.ayuddhyadavishhahyamapIshvaraiH ||  
(MBTN Canto 26 Verse 294)
```

Therefore, although Narayana's weapon was worthy of salutation for being His representative, such salutation could not be performed out of a desire for life; regardless of the consequences to one's life, the righteous thing was to confront the weapon:

```
namaskAryamapi hyastraM na namyaM jIvanechchayaA |  
samare shatruNA muktaM tasmAt.h tanna chakAra saH  
(MBTN Canto 26 Verse 296)
```

In the Mahabharata, the description of this episode includes a mystifying allusion to the scene of Bhimasena vs. the nArAyaNAstra as "fire confronting fire" -- this is explained in the MBTN as:

```
astrAbhimAnI vAyurhi devata.asya hariH svayam.h |  
tasmAd.h bhImaM svarUpatvAnnAdahachchAgnimagnivat.h  
(MBTN Canto 26 Verse 297)
```

-- to wit, that the activating deity of the nArAyaNAstra was verily Vayu, and its Lord was Hari Himself; therefore, as Bhimasena also was Vayu himself in undiminished form, he was not annihilated by his own power, just as fire is not burned by fire.

Even while maintaining his outward posture in accordance with his duty, Bhimasena took care to pay due respects to the Lord:

```
manasaivA.adaraM chakre bhImo.astre cha harau tadA |  
xatradharmAnusAreNa na nAma cha bAhyataH  
(MBTN Canto 26 Verse 298)
```

Thus, with complete and total devotion to hari, bhIma stood his ground and boldly faced the missile, with hari enshrined in his heart. Such was his faith and steadfast devotion that when he snorted, the missile changed course and veered backwards.

This, of course, was not the only instance where bhIma showed that his course of action was based upon the rules of righteous conduct. For instance, during the period when the Pandavas had to go incognito, he decided to become a cook, noting that it would not be appropriate for him, as a gR^ihastha and a xatriya, to eat the cooking of just anybody else:

```
parapAko gR^ihasthasya xatriyasya visheshhataH |
```

na yogya iti sUdasya babhre veshhaM vR^ikodaraH
(MBTN Canto 23 Verse 4)

He also did not seek to propitiate other deities to obtain their astra-s, as their worship, and desire-driven action, were alien to him:

na kAmyakarmakR^it.h tasmAnnAyAchad.h devamAnushhAn.h |
na harishchArthitastena kadAchit.h kAmalipsayA
(MBTN Canto 18 Verse 5)

However, as per Hari's will, he did use astra-s during the battle, thus showing that their use was already available to him.

There was never an instance where Bhimasena and Krishna were not completely in synchronism; this however could not be said of others, who on occasion did find fault with Krishna. BalarAma, for instance, felt animosity towards Krishna believing Him to have misappropriated the `syamantaka' gem. There are other instances where Arjuna and others "close to Krishna" such as Pradyumna, Uddhava, Samba, Aniruddha, etc., all were similarly guilty. Throughout the entire mahabhArata, the only two persons who never moved away from total and complete devotion to Krishna were bhIma and draupadi.

Coming back to the nArAyaNAstra incident, with a little application, it is easy to discern the following points in this incident:

1. bhIma did not abandon his dharma in the face of adversity and take the easy course out. He stood his ground with faith and devotion.
2. krishNa had already said that the pAnDavas were very dear to him and would never let any harm come to them. bhIma was the only one who believed this with his heart and soul and was willing to risk his life to show that the Lord would protect His devotees under all circumstances.
3. krishNa let His devotee derail His own weapon. Just as he broke His own oath (not to take up arms) in order to help bhIshma keep his oath (that he would make krishNa take arms). He does these things to show that even though he is satya-sankalpa (one whose intentions always come true) and sarvOttama, He sometimes breaks His own rules out of love for His devotees. Another way of looking at this is that no rule can tie Him down - even His own!
4. Like prahlAda, bhIma showed the world that no weapon, missile or agency can hurt a true and steadfast devotee of the Lord, not even the nArAyaNAstra itself.
5. bhIma knew very clearly that the power behind the nArAyaNAstra was nArAyaNA, and the power protecting him too was nArAyaNA. So, when the attacker is the same as the defender, where is the cause for fear? One just needs to do one's duty and leave the rest to Him.
6. Lucky is the one who has devotion to such a merciful Lord! Fortunate is the one who can point to such a great devotee and say "A vAyu namma kula guru rAyanu"

Verse 21:

*chanDavikrama gadegonDu raNadoLage bhU
manDaladoLidirAdanta khaLaranella
hinDi bisuTida vrukOdarana pratApavanu
kanDu nilluvarAru tribhuvanadoLu*

Word-by-word Meaning:

chanDavikrama = unmatched in defeating enemies on the battlefield
gadegonDu = carrying the mace
raNadoLage = in war
bhUmanDaladoL = on the Earth
idirAdanta = coming face-to-face (or meeting)
KaLaranella = all the bad and evil people
hinDi = wrenching
bisutida = throw out
vrukOdarana = another name for bhIma
pratApavanu = bravery
kanDu = seeing
nilluvarAru = who can stand (withstand)
tribhuvanadoLu = in all the 3 worlds

Quick Translation:

When bhIma, a ferocious and undefeated warrior, roams the warfield with his mace, decimating all the enemies confronting him, who in all the three worlds can stand up against his prowess?

Discussion:

chanDavikrama

Even though all the incarnations of vAyu are equally capable, in terms of bala (strength) and gyAna (knowledge), each incarnation has a special focus, based on the demands of the situation. The second incarnation as bhIma was known as a fearsome and unmatched warrior, who inspired fear in the hearts of his enemies, and who never tasted defeat, even once. In contrast, the other hero of the kurukshEtra (arjuna), tasted defeat several times in his life (all of these were when krishna was not around to save him). In strength, courage, steadfastness in the face of adversity, there was nobody who could match bhIma, let alone exceed.

As we all know, the focus of the third incarnation, madhvAchArya, was on gyAna. However, once in a while, he displayed flashes of his legendary strength and valor. When he was given a huge quantity of milk and bananas, by somebody who doubted the fact he was an incarnation of vAyu, he polished them off quite easily. He is also supposed to have lifted a huge boulder with ease, which scores of people could not even move. While visiting kurukshEtra, he showed his disciples the place where bhIma's mace was hidden.

gadegonDu raNadoLage

This has 2 references; the more straightforward one is to bhIma's favorite weapon - the mace. He was unmatched when he strode the battlefield with his mace

proudly resting on his shoulders. But then, he was unmatched even with his bare fists. So the reference to the mace is a pointer to something more subtle.

It is said that the 3 types of jIvas - sAtvikas, rAjasikas, tAmasikas - get rid of their linga-dEha (a type of covering that the jIva has from time immemorial, and which goes away only when the jIva is ready for its final destination) in 3 different ways. sAtvikas lose it when they take a bath in the virajA river along with brahma. rAjasikas lose it through vAyu's snort. tAmasikas lose it when vAyu hits them with his mace; thereafter they proceed to tamas (dark and unending hell).

So, one may conclude that shrIpAdarAjaru is saying, in a poetic way, that not only does he despatch demons from this world with his mace, but also sends them to their final destination with it.

bhUmanDaladoLidirAdanta khaLaranella

In the harivAyu stuti, shrI trivikrama panDitAchArya has beautifully described his inadequacy to describe bhIma's valor in the verse "kShvELAkShINATTahAsam". He finally concludes that only 2 people can do justice to this topic - vEdavyAsa (the author of bhArata) and madhvAchArya himself - and offers his heartfelt salutations to them.

Another aspect to remember is that even though bhIma was the most powerful person of his times (with the exception of krishNa, of course), his power and strength were always used to eradicate loka kanTakaru (evil people who were a source of misery to society), and never for any personal gain.

As was stated in a previous posting, every single asura or demon killed by bhIma was offered as a 'bali-pashu' to krishNa, the acceptor of all yagna offerings. In the hearts of such evil people, his very name used to cause jitters.

vrukOdarana

There is a very popular misconception about the meaning of this name. A direct translation means somebody who has a wolf-like stomach, i.e, is a voracious eater. bhIma's legendary ability to consume huge amounts of food lends credibility to this misconception. The real meaning and origin of this name is totally different.

Every jIva has a jaThArAgni (flame) in its stomach. This is a form of the Lord, and helps the jIva digest its food. vAyu's jaThArAgni is the most potent amongst all jIvas and the form of the Lord that permeates this flame is called "vruka". Hence the term "vrukOdara" really means one who carries "vruka" in his stomach. It is this which gives vAyu the ability to digest gigantic amounts of food.

One needs to understand that when bhIma ate food, he did so as a naivEdya to the Lord within him, and not because he was hungry or could not survive without food. vAyu is the life force that keeps 8,400,000 types of species alive and kicking; every act of every jIva is performed under his supervision. So, associating human-like frailties such as hunger, thirst, etc - with him is very foolish and goes against what is said in the scriptures.

Verse 22:

<i>nArirOdana kELi manamarugi gurusutana</i>

*hArhiDidu shirOratna kitti tegeda
nIroLaDagidda duryOdhanana horageDahi
Uruyuga tanna gadeyinda murida*

Word-by-word Meaning:

nArirOdana = woman's wail
kELi = on hearing
manamarugi = feeling sympathy
gurusutana = son of guru (ashwatthAma)
hArhiDidu = quickly caught
shirOratna = jewel in the head
kitti tegeda = (he) fiercely pulled out
nIroLaDagidda = the one who had hidden in the water
duryOdhanana = duryOdhana
horagedahi = pull out
Uruyuga = thigh
tanna = his
gadeyinda = with his mace
murida = broke

Quick Translation:

Upon hearing the sobbing of droupadi, his heart melted with compassion. He then caught ashwatthAma, the son of his teacher (and also the perpetrator of the heinous crime) and stripped him of his birth-stone (the source of all his powers). He pulled out duryOdhana who was hiding in the water and broke his thigh with his mace.

Discussion:

This verse covers a slightly difficult topic - the stripping of ashwatthAma's maNi (pearl). The difficulty arises because the version given by the mahAbhArata is different from that in the bhAgavata (and both are by the same author!). This confusion is likely to persist until one reads the very plausible explanation given by shrimadAchAya in MBTN. He explains that the mahAbhArata describes the actual events, whereas the bhAgavata describes the vision or dream that ashwatthAma had.

At the end of the kurukshEtra war, ashwatthAma spent time with the fallen duryOdhana and asked him "What do you want me to do?" duryOdhana said "Get rid of the pAnDavas". He then performed the abhisheka of ashwatthAma with dust and asked him to beget a son from duryOdhana's wife and continue the line of kauravas further.

ashwatthAma agreed and went to the camp of the pAnDavas in the middle of the night. He woke up the sleeping drushtadhyumna (droupadi's brother) and killed him mercilessly, without giving him a chance to pick up weapons and fight. Finally, he set fire to the tent in which he thought the pAnDavas were sleeping. Unfortunately for him, it was not the pAnDavas but their sons who were sleeping there. ashwatthAma then ran to duryOdhana and gave him the good news. duryOdhana died peacefully after this.

droupadi lamented the death of her sons and asked the pAnDavas to avenge this. bhIma, krishna and the rest of the pAnDavas went in pursuit of ashwatthAma. When ashwatthAma saw the fierce rage of bhIma he remembered what had happened to

dushyAsana and panicked. In order to escape bhIma's onslaught he fired the brahmAstra at him. Immediately arjuna fired another brahmAstra to counter that even though he knew fully well that bhIma was the abhimAni devata (patron diety) of the brahmAstra and was thus immune to its awesome power.

vEdavyAsa came there and chided arjuna and ashwatthAma for releasing such a powerful weapon without thinking of the impact it would have on the rest of creation. He asked them to withdraw the weapon immediately. arjuna was able to do so, but ashwatthAma could not do so because he had lost his moral power by agreeing to beget a son from duryOdhana's wife.

ashwatthAma had a divine maNi (pearl) in his head from birth. This potent jewel had the power to ward off death, disease, old-age, hunger, thirst, darkness, ignorance etc. It was one of the main sources of ashwatthAma's strength.

vEdavyAsa then asked ashwatthAma to give his maNi to bhIma as atonement for firing brahmAstra at him and for his inability to withdraw it. ashwatthAma immediately complied with vEdavyAsa's order. vEdavyAsa then asked arjuna to withdraw the brahmAstra discharged by ashwatthAma, which he did.

(The sequence given in the verse seems to be slightly different. Actually, the verse seems to agree with another popular version about this event. It is said that one group wanted ashwatthAma to be killed for his heinous sin, whereas another group demurred at the thought of further bloodshed. So, as a compromise, it was decided that he should be stripped of his jewel, which would be equivalent to death and yet would avoid the actual killing. I have stuck to the version given in MBTN by shrimadAchArya. More learned readers may wish to comment on this.)

Verse 23:

<i>dAnavaru kaliyugadoLavatarisi vibhudaroLu vEnana matavanaruhalanaritu gyAni tA pavamAna bhUtaLadoLavatarisi mAnanidhi madhvAkhyanendenisida</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

dAnavaru = demons or wicked people
kaliyugadoLavatarisi = taking birth in kaliyuga
vibhudaroLu = amongst good people
vEnana = bad or wicked (named after a king of that nature)
matavanaruhalanaritu = matavanu + aruhalu + adannu + aritu
= on realizing that they were preaching a false doctrine
gyAni = the wise or all-knowing
pavamAna = vAyu
bhUtaLadoLavatarisi = bhUtaLadoLu + avatarisi = incarnating on Earth
mAnanidhi = the highly revered and respected
madhvAkhyanendenisida = became famous or well-known as madhva

Quick Translation:

When evil people incarnated in kaliyuga and started spreading an inferior and evil philosophy, pavamAna (vAyu) incarnated on earth and became famous as madhwa.

Discussion:

vEnana mata

Our purANas talk of an evil king called vEna who spread a vile and wicked doctrine; he forced his people to worship him as God and ruled that all religious activities like yagnas were to be submitted to him. Finally, all the sages got together and punished him. Out of his body they magically extracted a baby, who was named as pRuthu, and who went on to become a very righteous and respected ruler (since Earth was ruled by him, it got the name prithvi).

dAnavaru kaliyugadoLavatarisi

Many asuras and rAkshAsas (demons) were vanquished and killed by hanumanta and bhIma during their incarnations. Unable to match vAyu in strength, they decided to take revenge by spreading false knowledge amongst humans. The idea was that if good people were led astray, then as jIvattoma and the leader / preceptor of good souls vAyu would be effectively humiliated. With this end in mind they incarnated in kaliyuga and assuming the garb of ascetics, started spreading false philosophies. One of their leaders was a very vicious and powerful demon called maNimanta who had been killed by bhIma (for more details refer to posting 21 - this describes bhIma's acquisition of sougandhika pushpa).

The wrong philosophies and doctrines propogated by asuras was based on a deliberate misinterpretation of our holy scriptures. The one propogated by maNimanta was based on the concept that everything is unreal, all jIvas are the same as parabrahma (hari), who is totally attributeless and formless. The term "vEnana" has been used to indicate that this doctrine is conceptually similar to the one propogated by King vEna, and is equally worthy of condemnation.

Normally, many are under the impression that all doctrines ultimately lead to the same noble end, and/or that the differences between them are too esoteric to be realized by persons like oneself who do not have a deep understanding of the texts, their rules of interpretation, etc. In order to enable even the dull to have some appreciation of the correct positions, Vishnu incarnated as Vyasa:

nashhTadharmaj~nAnalokakR^ipALubhiH brahmarudrendrAdibhirarthito
j~nAnapradarshanAya bhagavAn.h vyAsO.avatatAra |

(gItAbhAshhya)

The Mahabharata, and the Puranas, which are of His composition, convey in simple story form great truths that persons such as oneself could not otherwise appreciate. For instance, the complete story of the Mahabharata conveys the message that ill-treatment of women is not to be taken lightly. Any miscreant guilty of such, and any of his aides, or even any neutral bystanders who refuse to take an adverse position as required, will have to face the wrath of the Supreme, who will annihilate the evil one and all that is his. If a man were to take this message to heart and moderate his conduct accordingly, he could surely be said to have gained something, regardless of his lack of scholastic ability.

Similarly, also, it is to be noted that if difference between the individual and the Supreme is not accepted, then persons such as Vena and Paundraka must be considered highly realized and gifted individuals, for proclaiming their identity with the Supreme. However, these individuals are described as scoundrels of the first rank who met with an ignoble fate, but never as people worthy of emulation. Thus, once again, regardless of the paucity of one's

abilities, one is led to understand that it is not the message of the shaastra-s that one follow the lead of Paundraka, etc., regardless of all arguments to the contrary.

gyAni tA pavamAna bhUtaLadoLavatarisi

The state of affairs prior to the advent of vAyu is beautifully captured in the shri harivAyu stuti ("dEhAdutkrAmitAnAjivatAm chAdhikRutya) and in the sumadhava vijaya (Canto 2, Verse 1).

As the sun of correct knowledge was setting due to the influence of kali, the darkness created by the confluence of wrong interpretations blinded good souls and lead them away from the path of true knowledge. The gods lead by brahma were saddened by this and approached mukunda (Lord viShNu) for succour.

Since the Lord does not incarnate during kaliyuga, and because brahma never incarnates, He directed vAyu to incarnate and show worthy and deserving souls the correct path to salvation. Accordingly vAyu took birth as the son of a pious couple in Udupi and the rest is history.

The way in which shrI madhvAchArya took his birth is beautifully described in the sumadhava vijaya (Canto 2, Verse 25).

"sampUrNa lakshaNachaNambhagvAn vivEsha"

vAyu, the master of the three worlds, entered the body of the embryo that was present in his mother's womb, expelling the existing jIva. This body, endowed with 32 marks of excellence and 9 glowing exits, was like a temple, ready for his arrival. vAyu's action resembled that of a victorious king who expells an existing ruler and making his way through his lovely city, enters his resplendent palace, embellished with well decorated doors.

mAnanidhi madhvAkhyanendenisida

The baLitTha sUkta very clearly identifies shrI madhvAcharya by name as the third incarnation of vAyu. The name "madhvA" literally means one who dispenses happiness; incidentally, this is the same as Ananda tIrtha, the ashramanAma (name taken after becoming an ascetic) of shrI madhvAcharya. Here happiness means true and everlasting happiness, viz., liberation. As the one who showed the correct path to liberation, and thus helped good souls realize their innate happiness, the name "madhvAcharya" is very appropriate.

Verse 24:

<p><i>arbhakatanadoLaidi badariyali madhvamuni nirbhayadi sakala shAstragaLa paTisida urviyoLu mAye bIralu tatvamArgavanu (mAye bIralu tatvamArgavanu) Orva madhvamuni tOrda sujanarge</i></p>

Word-by-word Meaning:

arbhakatanadoLaidi = (he) reached in a young age
badariyali = in badari (the place where Lord vEdavyAsa resides)
madhvamuni = sri madhvAchArya

nirbhayadi = without fear (confusion, ambiguity)
sakala = all
shAstragaLa = scriptures
paTisida = recited
urviyoLu = in the world
mAye = illusion
bIralu = spread
tatvamArgavanu = the path of true knowledge
Orva = one (and only one)
madhvamuni = sri madhvAchArya
tOrda = showed
sujanarge = to good people

Quick Translation:

At a very young age, he went to badari without fear and learnt all the shAstrAs (in vEdavyAsa's presence). When a spurious philosophy started permeating the earth, only madhvamuni showed the correct path to good people.

Discussion:

arbhakatanadoLydi badariyali paTisida

shrI madhvAchArya went to badari twice. This verse refers to the first visit. [The author of the reference book claims that shrI madhvAchArya visited badari once in his boyhood, before taking up sanyAshrama. This is not explicitly supported by the sumadvavijaya or the harivAyustuti, nor is it ruled out. It is claimed that the tIka on harivAyustuti by shrI vishvapati tIrtharu describes this event. I would like to continue without further comment].

As everybody knows, the trek to badari is not an easy one; it is arduous and hazardous at every step. However, shrI madhvAchArya undertook this trip with absolutely no fear or reservations. The Sumadvavijaya provides a nice description of the first visit. The travel was very pleasant, with a symbolic cool breeze because shrI MadhvAchArya (shrI VAYu himself) was leading the entourage. He reached Badari and offered his salutations to shrI NArAyaNa. He sent his disciples away and presented his commentary on the gIta to God. He told God that he had created this commentary to the best of his capability. To this God replied, "Not really, you have more capability but have written only a little, you could do even more ". To this end, He asked shrI MadhvAchArya to substitute one word in the commentary, from 'shaktitah' (to the best of my ability) to 'lEshatah' (lightly, or not at great depth). On the same night, God woke shrI madhvAchArya and asked him to present his commentary again. This shows how happy the Lord was with this work.

shrI madhvAchArya learnt the essence of all shAstras from the Lord Himself. Even though he had been already blessed with this knowledge by the grace of hari, he went through the learning process for a variety of reasons. Primarily, because the act of listening to his Lord and Master gave him a lot of pleasure. Also, to emphasize the fact that true knowledge has to be learnt from a guru. And finally because he wanted the world to know that his knowledge of scriptures had been imparted to him by the Lord Himself.

urviyoLu mAye bIralu tatvamArgavanu Orva madhvamuni tOrda sujanarge

Let us take a quick look at the state of affairs prior to the advent of shrI madhvAchArya.

The thirteenth century was a period of great turbulence in India's political and religious history. On the philosophical front, Buddhism and Jainism had taken birth and were spreading their roots. In addition, Saivism was also on the rise in parts of Tamilnadu and Karnataka.

Among vedantic philosophies, shrI Sankara's Advaita (monism) was the dominant one. Its central theme is mAyavada (Theory of illusion) which states that the whole world is unreal and there is only one real substance called Atman or Brahman. Brahman is supposed to be nirguNa (without any attributes). shrI Ramanujacharya did give a theistic rebuttal to Advaita, but it was not complete. There were 21 commentaries on the brahmasUtras, and none of them exactly captured what the sUtrakAra (vEdayvyAsa) had in mind.

This state of affairs is summarised beautifully in the shri harivAyu stuti Verse 29 ("dEhAdutkrAmitAnAjivatAm chAdhikRutya) and the sumadhava vijaya (Canto 2, Verse 1) as follows:

"vig.yAnabhAnumatisharaNam prajagmuhu"

"As the sun of correct knowledge was setting due to the influence of kali, the darkness created by the confluence of wrong doctrines blinded good souls and lead them away from the path of true knowledge. The gods lead by brahma were saddened by this and approached mukunda (Lord viShNu) for succour."

Since the Lord does not incarnate during kaliyuga, and because brahma never incarnates, He directed vAyu to incarnate and show worthy and deserving souls the correct path to salvation. Accordingly vAyu took birth as the son of a pious couple in Udupi and the rest is history.

Verse 25:

<i>sarvEsha hara, vishwa ella tA pusiyeMba durvAdigaLa matava nere khandisi sarvEsha hari, vishwa satyavendaruhida sharvAdigIrvaNa santatiyali</i>

(in most published works, the first line begins as "sarvesha hari", but that is wrong as the context clearly indicates).

Word-by-word Meaning:

sarvEsha = Lord of everything (and everybody)
hara = shiva
vishwa all = the entire universe (and everything else)
tA pusiyeMba = is false or a myth
durvAdigaLa = people propounding wrong or bad doctrines
matava = philosophy
nere khandisi = condemn totally
sarvEsha = Lord of everything (and everybody)
hari = hari or nArAyaNa
vishwa = the universe
satyavendaruhida = he averred that it is true
sharvAdigIrvaNa santatiyali = in accordance with ancient scriptures

Quick Translation:

"Hara (shiva) is the supreme Lord, the entire universe is a myth or illusion". The essence of this wrong or bad doctrine was refuted by shrI madhvAchArya who averred that "Hari is the supreme lord, and the universe is true" in accordance with our ancient and sacred scriptures.

Discussion:

sarvEsha hara, vishwa ella tA pusiyeMba

Demons who hated hari and vAyu took birth during kaliyuga and propagated their false doctrines, masquerading as ascetics. They wilfully misinterpreted the vEdas, wrote wrong and misleading commentaries on the brahmasUtras, and propagated their own doctrines, with the sole intention of misleading good souls. Chief amongst these doctrines was (or continues to be) mAyAvAda. Its main tenets are "brahma satyam, jagan mithyam, aham brahmAsmi" i.e., only parabrahma is true, everything else is an illusion, there is no difference between parabrahma and other souls. In addition, they consider the parabrahma to be devoid of all attributes ("nirguNa") and hold shiva & parvathi to be superior to viShNu.

The sumadhva vijaya (Canto 1, verse 55) captures this very poetically "vishavam mithyA nUnam tirOabhUt". It says that the asuras propagated their doctrine in all directions, stating that brahman is without attributes, there is no difference between parabrahman and ordinary jIvas. Alas, as a consequence, the supreme Lord nARayaNa who is full of knowledge and bliss, started fading from the minds of the virtuous.

durvAdigaLa matava nere khandisi

The Lord is full of countless auspicious attributes, without any trace of a flaw. His power is infinite and unlimited; only an infinitesimal part of His nature and greatness can be grasped by humans, and that too only through good scriptures - the vEdas, mahAbhArata, bhAgavata, mUla rAmAyaNa and pancharAtra. Other purANAs that do not conflict with the basic tenets enunciated by the above - - may also be considered good scriptures.

Lord vEdavyAsa composed the brahmaSutras to help the virtuous grasp the import of the vEdas correctly and unambiguously. Consequently, they occupy a very high position in our religious hierarchy, and anybody who wishes to start a school of thought has to necessarily begin with a commentary of the brahmasUtras and show how they support his/her conclusions.

Before the advent of shrI madhvAchArya, there were 21 improper or misleading commentaries on the brahmaSutras. He critically evaluated each of them, and pointed out all their inconsistencies and flaws, in a precise and logical manner, using references from scriptures. No commentary was able to stand up to his incisive scrutiny.

sarvEsha hari, vishwa satyavendaruhida sharvAdigIrvaNa santatiyali

Using references from scriptures and arguing cogently, shrI madhvAchArya was able to show that all scriptures, as well as the brahmasUtras enunciate the same basic tenets - supremacy of Lord viShNu, reality of the world, 5-fold differences, hierarchy of souls in sansAra and in mukti etc. The essence of his thinking is captured in the Prameya shloka by shrI vyAsa tIrtha. Interested readers may refer the following URL for more details:

<http://www.dvaita.org/shaastra/prameya.html>

There are 3 features that distinguish shrI madhvAchArya's approach - usage of supporting references, consistency in approach and themes, and resolution of contradictions.

He rarely makes a statement without giving supporting references, underscoring the fact that the concepts put forth by him are eternal and timeless, not something that he discovered or invented like other philosophers before him.

When one goes through his works the thing that immediately stands out is the remarkable consistency of approach and clarity of thought. There is one central theme that runs through all of his works - the supremacy of ViShNu and the dependence of other entities on Him for sustenance. Everything else is woven around this theme and flows from it. One does not find this kind of consistent, coherent thinking in the works of any other vedanta philosopher.

He was the first one (and perhaps the only one) to resolve seeming contradictions within the scriptures themselves. Everybody else either ignored them or discarded one in favor of another. This has been very tellingly captured by shrI NAPS RAO in a posting made quite a while ago. I am quoting only a portion of this posting in order to conserve space. Interested readers may visit the following URL for the full posting:
http://www.dvaita.org/list/list_15/msg00037.html

"When two very young cows (each having only one calf) are fighting without any respite, who except a Mleccha boy will kill one and end the fighting. He will try to tempt one or both of them by offering young green grass, fodder etc., make it interested in some other object and stop the fighting, even if they are still angry with each other. Similarly, when two Vedic texts appear to make opposite statements, they should be reconciled with each other by interpreting the one which is NiravakAsha (can only be interpreted in one manner) and then interpreting the other which is SAvakAsha (can be interpreted in more than one manner) according to the first text, to remove the conflict in meanings.

The underlying principle is just as cows should not be killed to remove conflict among them, Shruthi texts can not be discarded by calling some of them as AthathvAvedaka - not conveying absolute truth and accepting as valid only some of them, which may superficially appear to support a particular doctrine - as Advaita does. The Vedas being ApaurushEya and free of all defects can not be treated in this manner - as there will always be the doubt as to which set of texts should be treated as valid (why not the other set? etc) and the very reasonable question that if some part of the infallible Vedas is saying untruths, why not all of them?. Even if it is assumed that some part of the Vedas do tell the absolute truth, it will be impossible to decide which part, unless we have some other pramana to judge their validity. In the case of nonsensory objects like Dharma, God etc. it is apparent that there is no other such pramana, unless one chooses to accept somebody's statements - as in all Paurusheya texts. The only source which is known to be Apaurusheya and infallible is thus rendered totally useless, if the absolute validity of ALL Apaurusheya texts is not fully accepted without any reservations. It is very important to understand that Acharya Madhva alone has stressed the inescapable necessity of accepting ALL the Vedas as the fountainhead of valid tatvas and has been extremely rigorous in reconciling all of them to show that his Thathvavada is the essence of the Vedic religion, unlike other schools which while accepting Apaurusheyathva of the Vedas, also postulate the unreality or invalidity of some

of them. The question of discarding or relegating to a secondary level any statement like "Aham BrahmAsmi" on the plea that it appears to go against our doctrine JUST DOES NOT ARISE, in Madhva philosophy"

Verse 26:

*Ekavimshati kubhAshyagaLa bEranu taridu
shrIkarArchitanolume shAstra rachisi
lOkatrayadoLidda suraru Alisuvante
A kamalanAbhayati nikaragoreda*

Word-by-word Meaning:

Ekavimshati = one plus twenty = twentyone
kubhAshyagaLa = wrong explanations of brahmasUtra
bEranu taridu = uproot completely
shrIkarArchitanolume = pleasing to Him, who is served by Lakshmi
with her own hands
shAstra = philosophy
rachisi = created or developed
lOkatrayadoLidda = the three worlds
suraru = gods
Alisuvante = (so that they) could listen
A kamalanAbhayati = saint named padmanAbha (could mean Lord vEdavyAsa
or padmanAbha tIrtha - madhvAchArya's first disciple)
nikaragoreda = went close to or gathered

Quick Translation:

He completely uprooted the 21 bad commentaries (on the brahmasUtras) and composed a philosophy that pleased the Lord, who is served by shrI Devi (lakshmi) with her own hands, viz., nArAyaNa. His discourses were heard with rapt attention by gods residing in the three worlds. Having done this, he went close to (or stayed) with Lord vEdavyAsa. [Or, another interpretation, he gathered a band of saints headed by padmanAbha tIrtha - his first disciple].

Discussion:

Ekavimshati kubhAshyagaLa bEranu taridu

There were 21 commentaries on the brahma sUtras before the advent of shrI madhvAchArya. (According to Dr. B.N.K Sharma) These were by: bhArati vijaya, sachchidAnanda, brahmaghOsha, shatAnanda, uddhRuta, vijaya, rudrabhatta, vAmana, yAdava prakAsha, mAdhava dAsa, bhaRtru prapancha, drAmida, brahmadatta, bhAskara, pishAcha, vRuttikAra, vijaya bhatta, viShNu krAnta, vAdIndra, shankara, ramAnuja.

shrI madhvAchArya critically evaluated each of them and pointed out the flaws, misconceptions and errors in them. His analysis was so thorough and logical that none of them could stand up to scrutiny again. That is why shrIpAdarAjaru uses the term 'bEranu taridu'.

shrIkarArchitanolume shAstra rachisi

shrI madhvAchArya wrote 4 works on the brahmasUtras. These are BrahmasUtra bhAshya, AnUbhAshya, AnuvyAkhyAna, NyAyavivarana. These four works together are

known as 'sUtra prasthAna'. A quick overview is presented in the final part of this posting.

His works were appreciated by everybody who had an open-mind and the intellect to appreciate his superior thought process.

When shrI vidyAraNya visited shrI jayatIrtha he is supposed to have look at shrI madhvAchArya's original text and said that it was bAlabAsha (the language of children). However, after seeing the commentary by jayatIrtha he is supposed to have realized the wealth of meaning hidden in those simple words.

10katrayadoLidda suraru Alisuvante

There are 2 aspects to this statement, one straightforward and one fairly involved. The former is that gods in the three worlds listened to his teachings with reverence; that is not very surprising since they knew who he was and the worth of his words.

To understand the involved aspect, ponder on the fact that he was no ordinary philosopher, trying to peddle his own brand of philosophy. As vAyu, the regulator and controller of all jivas, he could have easily converted every single person he came across, completely obliterating every other religion and philosophy. Yet, he did not. Why? Because that was not the Lord's will. shrI madhvAchArya's advent was only for the emancipation of worthy souls, and not everybody. When the gods lead by brahma approached Lord viShNu for succour, it was not so much because the scriptures had been misinterpreted but that truly worthy jIvAs were being lead astray by such misinterpretations.

That is why shrIpAdarAjaru used the terms "suraru Alisuvante", and not "ellaru Alisuvante". Here one needs to widen "suraru" to include "bhUsuraru" (gods on earth) i.e., truly worthy souls. That is why he focussed on only truly enlightened people like shObhana bhatta (who later became padmanAbha tIrtha), trivikramapanDitAchArya, narahari tIrtha etc ignoring the unworthy ones.

This fact will not be palatable to anybody who does not believe in his classification of souls.

A kamalanAbhayati nikaragoreda

This can be interpreted in 2 ways. The first one is that after completing the tasks that he had set out to achieve, he vanished from our midst (on madhva navami), and went to badari to stay in close proximity to vEdavyAsa (kamalanAbha yati).

The second interpretation is that having provided a solid foundation for his philosophy through his writings, he set up a group of faithful followers to propagate these concepts in all directions. This group was lead by shri padmanAbha tIrtha (kamalanAbha yati).

Overview of 'sUtra prasthAna'

The BrahmasUtras are a collection of 564 short phrases by shrI vEdavyAsa. They form the basis for interpreting the vEdas. They have been grouped into four chapters or adhyAyas with 4 sections in each chapter. The adhyAyas are Samanvaya, avirodha, sAdhana and phala adhyAya.

BrahmasUtra BhAshya : This is the primary work in the prathAna. It contains a detailed interpretation of each 'sUtra' and establishes the main tenets of dvaita. Some of the key ideas are as follows:

shrI NARayaNa is ParaBrahma, and that all names (including names of other devatas etc.), all words, and even all sounds are primarily His names and so apply to Him primarily.

The Lord can be pleased only by devotion combined with right knowledge, and complete attachment to Him.

The result of 'sadhana', is moksha or freedom from the bondage of this world. jIvas have a hierarchy amongst them commonly known as 'taratamya'

AnubhAshya: shrI MadhvAchArya composed this work when he heard that his Ashramaguru shrI achyutapreksha, who was reciting the BrahmasUtra bhAshya daily before taking food, was finding it difficult to do so on dvAdashi.

NyAyavivaraNa: This work also summarizes the brahmasUtra bhAshya, incorporating the points made out in anUvyAkhyAna.

anuvyAkhyAna : This was written in response to the request by shrI trivikrama panDitAchArya. It is said that shrI madhvAchArya dictated the four chapters of this work simultaneously to four of his sishyas. In order to fully understand this work, it is necessary to study it along with its commentary by shrI Jayatirtha - 'shrIman Nyayasudha'.

Verse 27:

<p><i>badarikAshramake punarapiyiedi vyAsamuni padakeragi akhila vedArthagaLanu padumanAbhana mukhadi tiLidu brahmatvavye dida madhwamunirAyagabhivandipe</i></p>

Word-by-word Meaning:

badarikAshramake = the hermitage in badari
punarapiyiedi = went again
vyAsamuni = saint vEdavyAsa
padakeragi = prostrated
akhila = all or entire
vedArthagaLanu = meaning of the vEdas
padumanAbhana = badarinARayaNa
mukhadi = from His own mouth
tiLidu = having learnt
brahmatvavyedida = attained the post of brahma
madhwamunirAyagabhivandipe = I prostrate with deep respect
to saint madhvAchArya, the king amongst all saints

Quick Translation:

I salute with deep respect madhwamuni, the king of all saints, the one who went to badari again and prostrated at the feet of vyAsamuni, and learnt the meaning of all shAstras directly from the mouth of padmanAbha.

Discussion:

badarikAshramake punarapiyiedi vyAsamuni padakeragi

shrI madhvAchArya toured North India twice. The reference in this verse is to the second one ("punaripiiedi").

Activities like crossing deep, overflowing rivers, bypassing hostile armies, climbing high mountains were performed with ease and he finally reached lower badari. He left behind his disciples there and climbed the mountains to reach badarikAsharama of vEda vyAsa. He felt overjoyed on seeing vEda vyAsa, along with his disciples. Heart overflowing with joy and devotion, he prostrated at vEdavyAsa's feet. The Sumadhva vijaya describes this encounter between paramAtma and jIvOttama as follows:

" munimanDala madhyavartinam trijaganmanDala manDanAyitam
eha satyavatI sutam harim paripUrNapramatih samaikshata"

hari(vEdavyAsa), the son of satyavati, provides lustre to the three worlds. The sight of vEdavyAsa sitting in the midst of other saints was seen by paripUrNapramati (the one whose knowledge is complete - an epithet used for shrI madhvAchArya) with a full heart.

Some of the highlights of the second trip to badari were:

- Meeting Lord BAdarayana at Badari, and receiving eight Saligramas from Him. Incidentally, these sAligrAmAs are called VyAsa Mushtis.
- Writing of shrIman MahAbhArata Tatparya Nirnaya, the great epitome of MahAbhArata.
- Conducting tapas (meditation) under a tree near GangA river for four months.
- Crossing the river GangA, defying physical and political limitations.
- Drawing attention of his disciples to some of the key incidents of the mahAbhArata war, including his exploits as bhImasEna

akhila vedArthagaLanu padumanAbhana mukhadi tiLiDu brahmatvavyedida

The straightforward meaning is that shrI madhvAchArya, who is destined to become the next brahma, learnt the shAstras from Lord vEdavyAsa. However, there is a subtle meaning hidden in the words used.

At the beginning of creation, a golden lotus sprung out from the navel of the Lord. brahma took birth in this lotus. The Lord then proceeded to impart knowledge to brahma. That is why our scriptures regard the Lord as the 'Adi guru' (the first preceptor) and brahma as the 'Adi sishya' (the first disciple) and the guru for the rest of creation. Incidentally, this is the origin of the terms 'hiraNya garbha' (golden womb), 'padmanAbha'. By using these terms, sripAdarAjaru is drawing our attention to this incident, and the fact that vAyu is 'bhAvi brahma' (future brahma).

madhwamunirAyagabhivandipe

The usage of the term "minurAya" is very meaningful. It has several interesting interpretations.

Amongst all creatures, humans are supposed to be a very high form because of their ability to think. Amongst humans, saints are worthy of reverence because of they have rejected mundane life and focussed their life around the almighty.

A king amongst such saints must then be worthy of the highest form of reverence. It also follows that this person must be very high amongst all creation i.e. jIvOttama.

A king's word is supposed to be law (or at least it used to be!). Similarly, a saint's saying must be adhered to with reverence. Then it follows that the word of a king amongst saints must be treated with the highest degree of reverence. That is why the sumadhvavijaya says that when our shrImadAchArya conducted his discourses, gods would assemble in the sky and hear him with reverence. No wonder our haridAsas have compared the teachings of shrImadAchArya to smruti and purANa vAkyas.

That is why sripAdarAjaru uses the term 'abhivandipe' rather than a simple 'vandipe' - to denote the deep respect and reverence that he has for shrImadAchArya. Such being the case, aren't you glad that "A vAyu namma kula gururAyanu"?

Verse 28:

<p>jaya jayatu durvAdimatatimira mArtanDa jaya jayatu vAdigajapanchAnana jaya jayatu chArvAkagarvaparvata kulisha jaya jayatu jagannAtha madwanAtha</p>

Word-by-word Meaning:

jaya jayatu = victory
durvAdimatatimira = the darkness caused by bad philosophies
mArtanDa = the sun
jaya jayatu = victory
vAdigaja = a majestic elephant in debates (and discussions)
panchAnana = an epithet for a lion
jaya jayatu = victory
chArvAkagarvaparvata = the mountain of chArvaka's pride
kulisha = implement of destruction
jaya jayatu = victory
jagannAtha = Lord of all the worlds (an epithet for nArAyaNa)
madwanAtha = madhvAchArya

Quick Translation:

May he, who is the sun that dispels the darkness brought about by bad doctrines, destroy our dark ignorance. May he, who is a ferocious lion to proud opponents (elephants), give us the courage and strength to oppose avidya, wherever we see them. May he, who demolishes the mountain-like pride of chArvAkas (pleasure-seekers) destroy our ego and ignorance. May jagannAtha and madhvanAtha bless us with devotion, knowledge and detachment (bhakti, gyAna, vairAgya).

Discussion:

In this verse, shrIpAdarAjaru uses analogies from shrI sumadhva vijaya and shrI narasimha nakha-stuti to describe and salute the greatness of shri madhvAchArya.

jayatu jayatu

This phrase has been used in each line of this verse. Normally "jayatu" means "Hail" or "Victory to". However, in this verse the target of the phrase is jIvOttama. He is an embodiment of devotion, purity and dedication to the Lord. He also personifies strength, knowledge and auspiciousness. Unlike other lesser gods, kali has no effect on him. He does not suffer from ignorance or misconceptions, at any point in time. Nor, does he ever taste defeat or failure in anything he does. So, interpreting "jayatu" as "Hail" would be superfluous and thus has to be considered as a secondary or unimportant meaning of the phrase. The primary interpretation must be to treat each usage as a prayer to vAyu to bless us with the specific attribute highlighted in that line.

durvAdimatatimira mArtanDa

This is a continuation of the metaphor used by the sumadhvavijaya (refer to posting 27 on verse 23 for more details). Prior to the advent of shrI madhvAchArya, the darkness created by the confluence of wrong doctrines and interpretations of the brahmasUtras blinded good souls and lead them away from the path of true knowledge. Just as sunrise dispels all traces of darkness, the advent of shri madhvAcharya dispelled all spiritual darkness and lead all sAtvikas away from the path of gloom and despair.

May this sun of true knowledge dispel our ignorance and destroy our wrong knowledge.

jaya jayatu vAdigajpanchAnana

It was not enough to merely dispel the spiritual darkness through correct knowledge, efforts had to be made to ensure that they did not rear their head again. Since proponents of wrong philosophies were too strongly entrenched, it was necessary to engage them in direct debate and defang them.

This line uses a different metaphor to describe this. Imagine a herd of wild elephants running riot. They leave behind a trail of destruction and despair. They brook no obstacle or opposition, trampling and ruining everything that comes in their way. So is the case with proponents of wrong doctrines. They vitiate our holy scriptures, take phrases out of context, ignore anything that militates against the concepts that they espouse and use the brute force of their obstinacy to create paths where there are none. They leave good souls wringing their hands in frustration. Into such an environment came a lion called shri madhvAcharya; a lion that fearlessly faced and decimated herd after herd of wild elephants without much ado.

May this lion among philosophers bless us with the courage and strength to stand upto our convictions, even in the face of adversity, and emerge victorious.

(Those who are familiar with the meaning of the narasimha nakha stuti will recognize the similarity in the analogies used.)

jaya jayatu chArvAkagarvaparvata kulisha

'chArvAka' is the name of a school of philosophy that propounded "the grossest form of atheism or materialism" (as defined by Apte).

shrI madhvAchArya refuted this philosophy, along with all the others that existed before his time. However, there is a reason why this particular term ('chArvAka') has been used. This is also the name of a rAkshAsa who was a friend of duryOdhana and an enemy of the pAnDavas. In the mahAbhArata, there are

several instances where he tries to mislead other good souls. Hence, in this verse, this term epitomizes every philosophy that misinterprets the scriptures and attempts to mislead sAtvikas.

Another metaphor has been used to describe this. indrA's vajrAyudha cut off the wings of arrogant mountains and decimated their ability to fly and cause havoc amongst people. Similarly, shri madhvAchArya's arguments were like vajrAyudhas (lightning bolts) that cut down the mountains called misleading doctrines.

(Once again, this very similar to the analogy used in the narasimha nakha stuti).

May the thunderbolts of his philosophy demolish destroy mountains of our sins and ego.

jaya jaya jagannAtha madvanAtha

In this verse, through a clever use of words, shrIpAdarAjaru salutes both shrI hari and vAyu.

jagannAtha is a well-known name of the Lord. He is also 'madhvanAtha', i.e, the nAtha or Lord of madhvA. 'jagannAtha' also means one who is accepted as the 'nAtha' or leader by all souls i.e., one who is the jIvOttama. 'madhvanAtha' is also the direct name of shrI madhvAchArya. Thus shrIpAdarAjaru salutes jivOttama and parmAtma together and prays for true devotion, knowledge and detachment (bhakti, gyAna, vairAgya).

Verse 29:

<i>tungakulaguruvarana hrutkamaladoLu nelesi bhangavillada sukhava sujanakella hingade koduva guru madhwAntarAtmaka rangaviTTalanendu nere sArirye</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

tungakula = lineage of superior gyAnis
guruvarana = the guru par excellence
hrutkamaladoLu = in the lotus of his heart
nelesi = residing
bhangavillada = without break or obstacles
sukhava = happiness
sujanakella = to all good people
hingade = without any reduction
koduva = the one who gives
guru = preceptro
madhwAntarAtmaka = resident within madhva
rangaviTTalanendu = the one named ranga viThThala
nere = everywhere
sArirye = spread

Quick Translation:

Ranga ViThThala (nArAyaNa) resides in the heart of shrI madhwAchArya, the guru par excellence, in the line of superior gyAnis. He gives happiness that is

without blemish or break to good people, without any reduction. Propagate this fact everywhere.

Discussion:

tungakulaguruvarana

The term 'tungakula' refers to the line of superior souls. These are the jIvas who are blessed with knowledge of the Lord. They are basically 'sAtvikas'. brahma and vAyu are the primary gurus for this line of sAtvikas. Our scriptures refer to brahma (vAyu) as the Adi jIva (first or primary soul).

hrutkamaladoLu nelesi

Our religious works refer to the presence of a 'ashTa daLA kamala' (a lotus with 8 petals or parts) in the inner space of the heart of the jIva. The Lord resides in the middle of the this lotus. He is the bimba-mUrTi of the jIva. At His feet and facing Him, stands vAyu with his hands folded in prayer. The jIva resides near the feet of vAyu. This is true of every jIva. However, in the case of vAyu and others equal or above him, there is nobody else other than the Lord.

bhangavillada sukhava

'bhanga' means that which is interrupted or corrupted, something that is temporary in nature. Thus "bhangavillada sukha" means bliss which is eternal, free of blemishes and never reducing in intensity. Obviously such a state of bliss is possible only in mukti or liberation, when the jIva experiences bliss that is intrinsic to its nature. All other happiness is temporary, subject to interruptions and diminishing over time.

sujanakella

'sujanaru' means people who are 'sAtvic' by nature. They are eligible for liberation. vAyu provides them with bhakti, gyAna and vairAgya and ensures that they perform their sAdhana (penance) in accordance with the wishes of the Lord. Once they have accomplished their sAdhana they are eligible for liberation, which is granted at the Lord's pleasure. vAyu too has the power to recommend jIvas for mukti (this power has been given to him the Lord).

hingade koDuva

This has several interpretations. First, granting of happiness (liberation) to worthy souls in no way reduces or diminishes the happiness of the Lord, or anybody else. In other words, each soul experiences happiness that is intrinsic to itself and independent of what is experienced by other souls. This concept of liberation is unique to dvaita.

Second, once the jIva achieves liberation, its happiness never reduces over time. Nor is this happiness ever tinged with sorrow of any sort.

Third, the Lord's power to grant liberation has never reduced and will never do so. In other words, God has been doing this from times immemorial and will continue to do so forever. Another interpretation is that this power to grant liberation rests only with Lord hari (and anyone He delegates this power to).

guru madhvAntarAtmaka

As stated before, the Lord resides in the heart of every jIva. However, His sannidhAna (special presence) in vAyu is the highest and purest. That is why when we pray, the object of our worship is always 'bhArati ramaNa mukhyaprANAtargata' (the Lord who resides in mukhya prAna, the husband of bhArati dEvi).

rangaviThThalanendu nere sArirye

'rangaviThThala' is the ankita or literary signature used by shrIpAdarAjaru. There is an interesting story on how he got this ankita. He once went to panDharApura and performed pAnDuranga's sEve (service) with great fervour and devotion. That night, pAnDuranga appeared in a dream and asked him to get a certain spot on the banks of the bhIma river excavated. When this was done, shrIpAdarAjaru found a golden box containing an idol of 'ranga viThThala', decorated with many precious jewels. He was overjoyed and with the idol on his head, danced with ecstasy. From that day onwards, this idol has been worshipped with great devotion by every saint who has headed the MaTha of shrIpAdarAjaru. He also started the tradition of composing dEvaranAmas (religious songs) in the name of his favorite icon. This tradition was continued by other saints like shrI vyAsarAyaru, shrI vAdirAjaru etc.

jagannAthadAsAra phala stuti - Verse 1

<i>sOmasUryOparAgadi gO sahasragaLa bhUmidEvarige suranadiya taTadi shrI mukundArpaNavenuta koTTa phalamakku I madhwanAma baredOdidarge</i>

Word-by-word Meaning:

sOmasUryOparAgadi = during solar and lunar eclipse
gO = cows
sahasragaLa = thousands
bhUmidEvarige = bhUsuraru = gods on earth (learned brahmins)
suranadiya = the divine river (ganga)
taTadi = on the banks
shrI
mukundArpaNavenuta = saying "krishnArpaNamastu"
(i.e. dedicating the fruits of this action to Lord shrI Krishna)
koTTa = to give
phalamakku = the fruits (or results)
I madhwanAma = this prayer called madhvanAma
baredOdidarge = to those who read and write

Quick Translation:

Anybody writing and reading this sthOtra will get a benefit equal to offering a thousand cows to learned and worthy brahmins, during a solar or lunar eclipse, on the banks of the celestial river ganga, and dedicating that to Lord Mukunda (nArAyaNa).

Discussion:

In this verse shrI jagannAtha dAsaru gives us an idea of the greatness of this prayer by shrIpAdarAjaru through a beautiful analogy. To understand the beauty of the analogy, one needs to look at some of the background material.

Our elders tell us that the act of offering something to somebody should be judged with 7 questions - who, to whom, what, when, where, how and why. In other words one should look at the following issues:

- who is offering the object,
- who is it being offered to,
- what is being offered
- why is it being offered
- when is the offering being made
- where is it being offered
- how is it being offered (or what is the mindset of the person making the offering)

The above questions need to be satisfactorily answered in order to judge an offering, and determine if it will meet with the Lord's approval.

sOmasUryOparAgadi

Solar and Lunar eclipses are considered to be parva-kAla (very auspicious times). It is said that performing good acts during such times yield a lot more fruit than normal times. In olden times, kings and noblemen used to perform various acts of charity during eclipses. (People who are familiar with 'rAghavEndra stOtra' will recognize that a similar sentiment is expressed in the line beginning "sOma sUryOparAge").

gO sahasragaLa

Amongst all animals, the cow is the most sacred. It is said that more than thirty million gods have a presence in this sacred animal. Consequently, a gift of cows is considered to very special. That is why while performing the death ceremony of a parent, children are asked to perform the symbolic gift of a cow, so that the fruit of such a meritorious act may accrue to the deceased parent.

bhUmidEvarige

Learned and worthy brahmins are considered to be bhUsuraru - gods who are present on earth and easily accessible. They epitomize all divine qualities like knowledge, devotion, detachment, kindness etc. shrI hari is supposed to have a soft corner for cows and learned brahmins. In fact several of His stOtras address him as 'gO brAhmaNa hitaya" (one who takes care of the welfare of vEdas, cows and brahmins).

Our scriptures stipulate that alms and boons should be given only to 'satpAtraru' (people who are worthy and virtuous). A learned and worthy brahmin is the best possible recipient for alms.

suranadiya taTadi

As everybody knows, the Lord came as a young brahmachAri named vAmana and asked for 3 steps worth of land from bali. With 2 steps He covered earth and the sky. When His foot appeared in satyalOka, brahmadEva washed it with reverence. His toenail pierced brahmAnDa and caused the holy ganga to appear. shIva took ganga on his head, displaying his reverence for hari-pAdOdaka (water obtained after feet are washed). Devout hindus long to have at least one dip in her holy waters during their lifetime. In fact, orthodox families keep a casket of ganga water

handy for use during the final hours of a family member. Such is the devotion and respect that the ganga has inspired over the ages.

During olden times, rishis used to prefer the banks of holy rivers to perform yagas, because the presence of the river would multiply the benefits obtained from such acts several fold. The ganga was the first choice for such yagas.

shrI mukundArpaNavenuta koTTa phalamakku

No matter how pious the act, there is no benefit unless one offers the fruits to the Lord, with the appropriate frame of mind. That is why the gIta says, "karmaNyEva adhikAraste" and our elders advise us to believe in the concept of "naham karta harih karta".

To summarize the above points, it may be said that to make an offering:

- cows constitute one of the best objects that one can offer
- the banks of the holy ganges is one of the best places to do so
- a solar or lunar eclipse is one of the best times to do so
- learned and worthy brahmins are the best possible recipients
- dedicating the fruits to the Lord is the most appropriate ending to an action

With the above background, one can easily see the merits of offering a thousand cows to learned and worthy brahmins, during an eclipse, on the banks of the ganga, and dedicating that to Lord Mukunda! Reading and writing this prayer will confer a similar benefit.

This is not sycophantic statement made by an admiring follower; it is a balanced assessment made by an aparOksha gyani.

jagannAtadAsAra phala stuti - Verse 2

<p><i>putrarilladavaru satputraraiduvaru</i> <i>sarvatradali digvijayavahudu sakala</i> <i>shatrugaLu keduvuru apamRutyu baralanjuvudu</i> <i>sUtranAmakana samstuti mAtradi</i></p>

Word-by-word Meaning:

putrarilladavaru = those without children
satputraraiduvaru = will get very good children
sarvatradali = everywhere
digvijayavahudu = will get victory
sakala = all
shatrugaLu = enemies
keduvuru = will perish or fail
apamRutyu = untimely death
baralanjuvudu = will be scared to approach
sUtranAmakana = an epithet for vAyu
samstuti = prayer coupled with devotion and knowledge
mAtradi = just by

Quick Translation:

Those without children will get good children, they will be victorious everywhere, all their enemies will perish, and untimely death will be scared to approach them. All these benefits will accrue by praying to sUtranAmaka (vAyu).

Discussion:

In the first verse shrI jagannAtha dAsaru gave us an idea of the enormous merits that accrue to a person reading and writing the madhvanAma. While this may be enough for gyAnis, there may be others who seek more tangible, material benefits. To such people he replies "This is sUtranAmaka, that you are praying to. Once he is pleased there is no limit to what you can get. You want children? You will get children. You want name, fame, wealth, relief from enemies? You will get all that. Why, you can even avoid untimely death! What more can you possibly want?!"

sUtranAmaka samstuti

vAyu is also known as sUtra since he is the controller and regulator of all the celestial entities in the body (indriyAbhimani and tattvAbhimani devatas and daityas). Every single action performed by every jIva (subordinate to him), everywhere in creation is done under his explicit supervision.

samstuti refers to prayer that is tinged with devotion and correct knowledge. Once this sUtranAmaka is pleased, then the sky is the limit; all doors open, everything falls into place and there is nothing that is out of reach.

putrarilladavaru satputraraiduvaru

A simple translation is "Those without children will get good children". However to get the full meaning of the verse, one needs to go beyond the simple meaning. Nothing happens without a reason. Why are some people childless? There may be medical causes preventing childbirth, but these are mere manifestations rather than the actual cause. The root of the problem lies in the sins committed by the persons and their prArabda karma. In olden days, kings and noblemen performed yagnas like "putrakAmEshTi" to wipe out their sins and obtain progeny. In this time and age, it needs potent prayers and the grace of celestials to overcome this problem. In the opinion of shrI jagannAthadAsaru, this prayer to vAyu is equal in potence to the "putrakAmEshTi" yAga in blessing supplicants with offspring.

sarvatradali digvijayavahudu sakala shatrugaLu keduvuru

The gIta says that our authority ends with action; success or failure lies in the hands of the Lord, and is decided by Him based on the jIvA's inherent nature and his/her karma. As the gIta says "yatra yOgeshwarah kRishNo tatra shrIvijayO bhUtirdruvA nitir matir mama". vAyu is His primary abode and agent. Needless to add, one who is subject to vAyu's grace will be victorious everywhere.

The question is: what kind of victory should one aspire for? There are different types of successes, but our scriptures attach a lot of importance to "indriya-jaya" - conquest of the senses. The sky is the limit for somebody who can do this.

This line also says "All enemies will fail". What kind of enemies are we talking about? We are very familiar with external enemies and would obviously like to win over them. But the more potent enemies are the internal ones; our scriptures

talk of 'arishadvarga' - the six enemies of man - anger, lust, greed, delusion, arrogance, jealousy. These can cause much more harm than any external enemy and their effects can last several births. (The bhAgavata tells us about sage bharata who set out to contemplate on the Lord but lost his way and had to take several births because of attachment to a deer!). Obviously these are the enemies that one needs to conquer.

apamRutyu baralanjuvudu

"Ayushya" is defined as the life span that is allocated to a being. Any death that happens before expiry of this period is untimely and is called "apamRutyu". Our shAstras say that once "Ayushya" is over death cannot be prevented, since that is Divine Will. However, "apamRutyu" is a different aspect altogether. Life-histories of our saints and other great souls are replete with instances where they warded off untimely death in deserving cases.

Our scriptures say that when a person dies, vAyu departs from the body along with jIvatma and paramAtma. Such being the case, is it necessary to add that a person enjoying the grace of vAyu will never die an untimely or untoward death?

I now propose to list the detailed explanation of the third (and last) verse in the Phala stuti by shrI jagannAtha dAsaru. In the first and second verses he gave us an idea of the enormous merits accruing to a person who reads and writes madhvanAma. Here he sums up everything and outlines the real benefit that anybody can hope for - liberation.

jagannAtadAsAra phala stuti - Verse 3

<p><i>shrIpAdarAja peLida madhwanAma santApa kaLedakhiLasoukhyavanIvudu shrIpati shrI jagannAtaviTTalana tOri bhava kUpAradinda kadehAyisuvudu</i></p>

Word-by-word Meaning:

shrIpAdarAja peLida = the (prayer) stated by shrIpAdarAjaru
madhwanAma = madhvanAma
santApa = sorrow
kaLedakhiLasoukhyavanIvudu = kaLedu + akhila + soukhyavanu + Ivudu
= (sorrows will) end and one will get all good things in life
shrIpati = the husband of shrIdEvi (i.e., hari)
shrI jagannAtaviTTalana = the form of the Lord known as jagannAtha viTTala
tOri = (will) show
bhava kUpAradinda = from the pit or well called sansAra
kadehAyisuvudu = will help you cross

Quick Translation:

This madhwanAma told by shrIpAdarAja will destroy all sorrows, provide all types of happiness and well-being, and in addition, will show you shrIpati jagannAtaviTTala and take you out of this well (or ocean) called samsAra.

Discussion:

Overview

All the benefits described in the previous verses of the phalastUtu were basically material in nature - wealth, health, progeny, happiness, freedom from enemies etc. But all of these pale in comparison to the main benefit that this prayer can confer. It offers what is ultimately the highest benefit that anybody can hope for - liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. shrI jagannAtha dAsaru saves this for the last because once one gets the desire for this benefit, then the other benefits pale in comparison and lose their attractiveness totally.

Numerology behind phalastuti

The first question to consider is why did shrI jagannAtha dAsaru compose a phala stuti with 3 verses? Why not 4 or 2? To answer this, look at the number of verses in the madhvanAma composed by shrIpadarAjaru. It is 29. By adding a phala stuti with 3 verses the total number of verses comes to 32. There is a symbolism associated with this number 32. All of vAyu's incarnations are supposed to possess perfect physiques with 32 distinguishing marks. So it is in the fitness of things that the prayer to an entity with a perfect physique (having 32 distinguishing marks) should comprise of 32 verses.

shrIpadarAja peLida madhvanAma

Just as shrI vEdavyAsa composed the purANas for the sake of those who are not eligible for reading the vEdas, shrIpadarAjaru wrote the madhvanAma for the benefit of those who have no access to the harivAyu stuti and the sumadhva vijaya. That is why he chose to use kannada, the language of common people, as the medium. This is in keeping with his stature as the pitAmaha of all dAsa sahitya (there is a school of thought that shrI narahari tIrtharu was the first one to compose dEvaranAmas in kannada and that shrIpadarAjaru revived this glorious tradition).

Before dismissing this stOtra as another kannada dEvaranama, one needs to remember that shrIpadarAjaru was an amsha of dhruva, an aparOksha gyAni, and the vidya guru of vyAsarAyaru. He has infused this stOtra with pristine bhakti and gyAna. So, in terms of spiritual content and value, it is worthy of adoration and worship.

santApa kaLedakhiLasoukhyavanIvudu

The term "santApa" normally means sorrow or unhappiness. However, in this context, a better interpretation would be 'tApatraya' - the three kinds of miseries which human beings have to suffer in this world - 'adhyAtmika', 'Adhidaivika' and 'Adhiboutika'.

akhiLasoukhyava means every possible happiness or wellbeing. This should be understood to include all types of happiness - material as well as spiritual.

shrIpati shrI jagannAtaviTTalana tOri bhavakUpAradinda kadehAyisuvudu

The word 'tOri' is a pointer to 2 concepts. The first is the initial sAkshAtkAra or meeting with the Lord, at which point the jIva becomes an aparOksha gyAni. All of his/her sanchita and AgAmi karmas get wiped out, and the jIva has to endure only his/her prArabda karma.

The second concept is that when the jIva goes for liberation, he meets with different bhagavad rUpas (forms of the Lord). The penultimate form is vAsudEva and the final form is nArAyaNa. This is very subtly captured in the prAtah

sankalpa gadya by rAyaru. There is a translation available in the archives (it was by shrI Bannur Ramachandra Rao, and posted by Naveen Bannur). Interested readers may refer this for more details.

The term 'shrIpati' should be understood in the context of what our AchArya has stated so beautifully in dvAdasha stOtra ("shrIryat katAksha balavatyaajitam nAmAmi"). The essence of this is that every deity (brahma, rudra, garuda, indra, sUrya, chandra etc) is able to function only because of Lakshmi's grace, and that She derives her power from Him. So, one should have this anusandhAna' (understanding) when one utters this prayer.

Importance of praying to vAyu

There is a common misconception that only mAdhvas give primacy to vAyu, whereas others consider him as just one of several important deities. This is a very wrong perception that does grave injustice to our scriptures, which proclaim vAyu's primacy in an unambiguous manner. There are any number of reasons why it is necessary to pray to vAyu in order to get hari bhakti. He is the foremost amongst all jIvas, and the primary guru for all creation. He is the Lord's dearest devotee; so dear that when he departs from the body, the Lord too departs immediately. He is acknowledged in all the three worlds as 'bhagavat kArya sAdhaka'. He performs 21,600 hansa japas per day in each jIva and submits it to the Lord on our behalf. Ignoring him, or not according to him the status that is his due, would tantamount to 'guru-droha' and is a sure way of incurring the Lord's displeasure and the wrath of every other deity.

Study our itihAsas (mUla rAmAyaNa and mahAbhArata) and purANAs. You will not find even one instance of somebody earning vAyu's grace and suffering misfortune. On the contrary, you will find several instances of people benefitting from his association. Look at how vibhIshana, sugrIva and arjuna benefitted from vAyu's grace, whereas karNa and vAlI suffered because of enmity with him. As purandaradAsaru says "hanumana matavE hariya matavu, hariyA matave hanumana matavu" (there is total identity of views between hari and vAyu).

That is why in the sumadhva vijaya, shrI nArAyaNa panDitAchArya says that he wishes to get hari bhakti that originates from guru bhakti ("mukundabhaktyai gurubhaktijAyai ...").

So, even if one is not born a mAdhva, it is still essential to obtain his blessings in order to obtain correct viShNu bhakti and gyAna. Of course, if someone is a mAdhva by birth, then it is their privilege and duty to develop correct vAyu bhakti as a prelude to hari bhakti.

CONCLUSION:

This posting concludes the series on madhvanAma.

shrI nArAyaNa panDitAchArya, the esteemed author of sumadhva vijaya and other great works, calls himself 'mandha budhdhe' (dull witted) and says that only deities like sEsha or rudra can do justice to the task of describing the greatness of vAyu. If this is the case with an enlightened soul like him, then one wonders about others! Still, there is not even a shadow of doubt in my mind that whatever has been accomplished has been done only because of the immense grace of shrI shrIpadarAjaru.

It is my hope that while going through this series you experienced at least a small fraction of the devotion that this great saint had for his 'kula guru

rAya'. If that is indeed the case then this series has more than served its purpose.

na mAdhva samO devo, na cha madhva sama guruh
na tadvAkyam samam shAstram, na cha tasya samah puman.

(shrI kRishNArpaNamastu)